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AUGUST 1929

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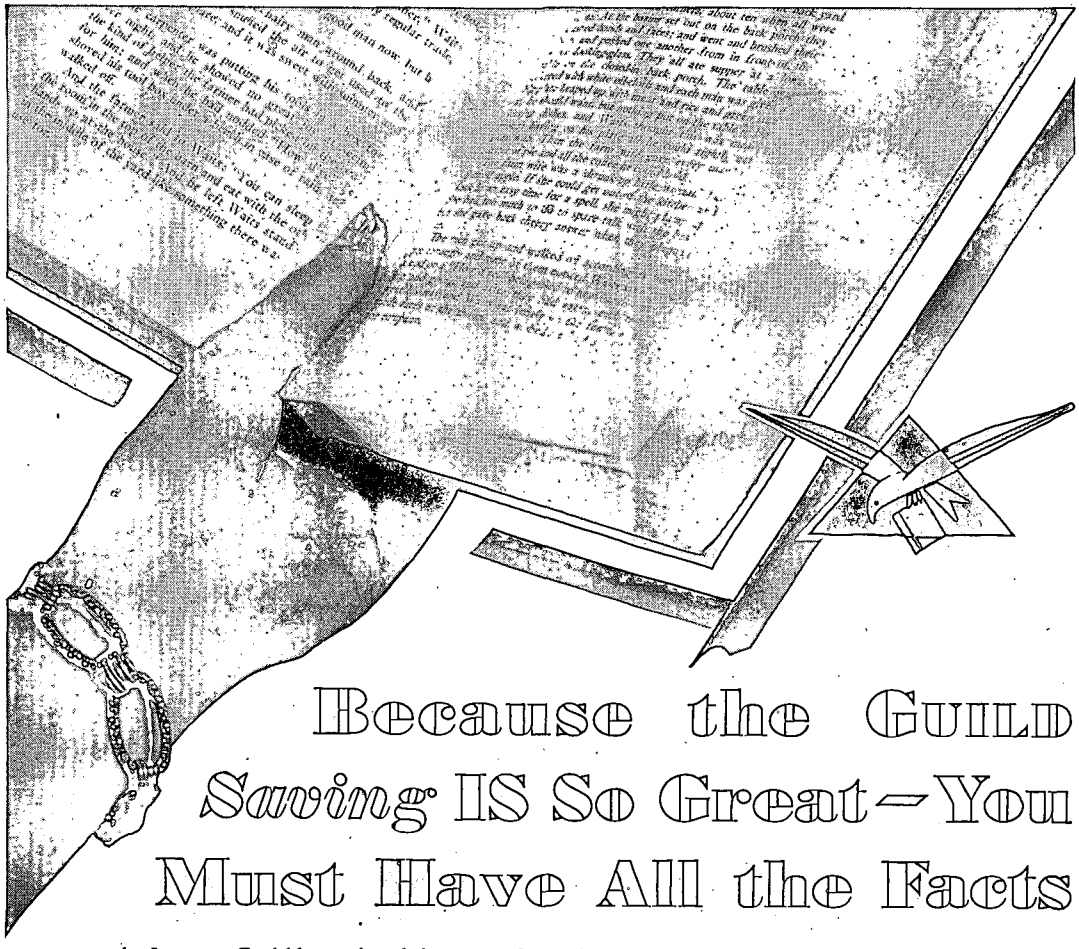

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# NOTES ON NEW BOOKS

## *Biography*

JOHN WESLEY *by Arnold Lunn* (DIAL PRESS. $4.00)

THE SON of Samuel Wesley, the courageous, humorous, faithful Anglican, and Susannah Annesley Wesley, who at thirteen had made a complete study of the controversy between the Dissenters and the Anglicans and had chosen the creed of the Church of England, John Wesley was the perfect product of his critically-minded, earnest parents. He was a fanatic, a saint, a politician and a sage. Almost without impulses, he directed his life according to a stern pattern ordained by his evangelical temperament. Mr. Lunn, with sympathy but without sentimentality, has shown us the boy, the young man—at Oxford and as a missionary in Georgia—the reformer, the politician, the leader. He has given us insight into the career of the great Methodist by means of personal anecdotes, told with dignity—John Wesley's loves and their frustration, his contempt for opposition, his pride, his indomitable single-mindedness. Mr. Lunn's style is fresh and simple, and it is a triumph for Mr. Lunn that he has been able to make John Wesley not only human, but almost lovable.

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS *by H. A. Spurr* (DUTTON. $2.50)

THIS is one of those friendly, rather formless biographies that rely on anecdote and authoritative quotation to make the points considered salient by the author. It was written in honor of the Dumas birth centenary of 1902, and Mr. Spurr's widow, who now re-edits it, describes the delight they both had in assembling the material. That their study was exhaustive and is of great potential value to Dumas students, is evidenced by the appendices. That their method has little in common with that of the present day, is shown by the various chapters which consider the life and character of Dumas apart from his writings and his genius. But the Spurrs loved Dumas, and that in itself is relief in an age of biographers whose choice of subject seems so often dictated by a defense mechanism that operates to the detriment of the reader's enjoyment. We learn just what his contemporaries and posterity thought of him, and we get his own argument against his critics. Here, in short, is the case for and against him, very fairly presented considering the partiality of those presenting it. If you enjoy D'Artagnan, you'll probably enjoy his creator as seen through the eyes of the Spurrs.

HELLDORADO *by William M. Breakenridge* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $4.00)

THIS is the record of the author's life from childhood through his career as Deputy Sheriff of Tombstone, Arizona. Packed with reminiscences of cowboys, rustlers, gunmen and Indians, in which the lawlessness of the old frontier West is accurately described, the struggle of law and order against the constant depredations of outlaws is depicted in a temperate and somewhat honeyed style. The quiet and efficient manner of "Colonel Billy" Breakenridge in part accounts for the lack of blood-and-thunder descriptions of the sort that so often characterized books about that chaotic period during the early years of railroads in the West. But even without the Nick Carter touch, this story of Tombstone has its appeal for those who enjoy the history of expansion in America.

ABIGAIL ADAMS *by Dorothie Bobbé* (MINTON, BALCH. $3.50)

WIFE of one president, mother of another, Abigail Adams was a remarkable woman. She was well educated by understanding parents who allowed her to marry the man of her choice.



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THE GRANDE TURKE *by Fairfax Downey* (MINTON, BALCH. $4.00)

THIS is the tale of "Suleyman *Kanuni,* the Lawgiver, Lord of His Age". Mr. Downey has related in a prose, whose strength and weakness are its color, the manifold events in the life of the great Sultan. The campaigns which spread the Ottoman Empire from India to Africa and north to Austria are described in language so brilliant and regal that war becomes a magnificent parade, a sublimated pageant. Mr. Downey, whose enthusiasm is infectious, has pictured vividly the army of Suleyman setting forth against Louis of Hungary. Wars punctuate the book—and the formidable numbers of those slain because of the Sultan's ambition are a commentary on modern statecraft. Roxelana, the red-haired Russian slave, whom Suleyman loved more than sons or friends, is a compelling portrait. The book is unquestionably impressive, a historically accurate treatise made absorbing by the author's absorption in his subject. One can justly object to the taint of sensationalism in Mr. Downey's style. Still, as has been said before, it is both his strength and his weakness.

THE UNTOLD STORY: THE LIFE OF ISADORA DUNCAN, 1921-1927 *by Mary Desti* (LIVERIGHT. $3.50)

MARY DESTI, for many years an intimate friend of Isadora Duncan, is able to contribute many interesting details concerning her life: the account of her days in Bayreuth, of her affliction in the terrible death of her children, the events in the desperate struggle to create a school in Russia, the hardships and misery that she encountered during her last years as well as the gay parties and joyous escapades of the same period. The dominant impression Mary Desti leaves is of a distracted woman.

WILLIAM PRINCE OF ORANGE *by Marjorie Bowen* (DODD, MEAD. $5.00)

FROM a background of sturdy historical data emerges the clear, proud personality of "William Henry, Prince of Orange, Count of Nassau, afterwards King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland". This book is not a complete life. It recounts his career, in vivid detail, from his sombre, ominous christening in the *Groote Kerk* to his amazing Pyrrhic victory over France and England—a victory won by an inexperienced young man of twenty-six, whose courage and vision made the incredible possible. His arrogant, shy mother, Mary Stewart; his hard, single-minded grandmother, Amalia of Solms-Braunfels; John de Witt, who dominated the Netherlands for twenty years; Louis XIV; Charles II—these and many other personages brighten Miss Bowen's pages. The book is lucid, concise; it is a full-length portrait of one of Europe's greatest princes. William Henry may be characterized—as few of his compeers deserve to be—as an honorable man.

KING HENRY THE RAKE *by Clement Wood* (STRATFORD. $3.50)

THE TITLE *Henry the Rake* aptly describes this book, in which Clement Wood has stressed the sensual side of the Eighth Henry's nature; he has traced the devolution of Bluff King Hal from the golden-headed prince who could hurl to the ground the stoutest champions in England, to the old Henry of dropsy-tortured body and gradually rotting mind, as graphically as Hogarth sketched his rake's progress.

CANNIBAL JACK *by William Diapea* (PUTNAM. $2.50)

A FEW well filled notebooks gathered together and put into shape for publication tell a part of the life of William Diapea. Satisfied to cruise for years amongst the Fiji Islanders gathering "shell" and collecting native wives, Diapea never returns to his English home, but roams about, enjoying life as he finds it. This story of his adventures gives us a more than casual acquaintance with the natives of Fiji and New Caledonia. He tells a tale to fire the imagination and leave the home-dweller envious.

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In the September number of

# THE BOOKMAN

JAQUES MARITAIN *by* GEORGE N. SHUSTER

An introduction, probably the first in English, to a French author coming into world renown; he is called by T. S. Eliot "the most conspicuous figure and probably the most powerful force in contemporary philosophy".

MORE "OLD BOOKMAN DAYS" *by* ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE

Further reminiscences by the former editor of THE BOOKMAN.

STUART SHERMAN AND PAUL ELMER MORE

A selection of the letters of Stuart Sherman (edited by his biographers Jacob Zeitlin and Homer Woodbridge) throwing light on the crucial period in his career when, apparently a disciple of Mr. More and a frequent contributor to the *Nation* under him, he nevertheless was developing the independent viewpoint which was later to become more pronounced and make him a puzzling figure to friends and opponents alike.

THE CHURCH FESTIVAL *by* MARY JOHNSTON

A story.

HOBNOBBING WITH EMINENT AUTHORS *by* DOUGLAS BUSH

Mr. Bush called on several of the literary elect when he was in England—with results not of the kind usually recorded.

AN ADVENTURE IN ILLOGIC *by* JANET RANKIN AIKEN

Another paper about some of the byways of English.

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## *Philosophy and Psychology*

SEX IN CIVILIZATION *edited by F. V. Calverton and S. D. Schmalhausen* (MACAULAY. $5.00)

THIS volume attempts the stupendous problem of presenting the facts about sex and its rôle in the history of mankind. "Pretense is the key to modern civilization . . . which means that our civilization is psycho-neurotic. . . . The pre-eminent fact is the breakdown of ancient norms and the consequent chaos that has come upon us. . . . The mood of revolt has infected all our behaviors, even the most intimate. . . . Extreme inhibition has given place to extreme exhibition. . . . In this volume we have attempted to give expression to every angle of . . . revolt and re-evaluation." The book is divided into six major sections: Sex Through the Ages, The Rôle of Sex in Behavior, Sex and Psycho-Sociology, Sex and Psycho-analysis, The Clinical Aspects of Sex and, lastly, Sex in Poetry and Fiction. There are thirty contributors to the symposium, who are recognized leaders in their fields, the introduction having been written by Havelock Ellis.

THE PROCESS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR *by Mandel Sherman and Irene Case Sherman* (NORTON. $3.00)

THE authors of this significant book discuss behavior in all living matter from uni-cellular organisms to humans. They claim that new-born infants, whom they studied with motion picture cameras for many years, revealed no signs of emotions until their environment brought complex experiences to them. These emotions and the rise in the infants of attitudes toward their own emotional reactions brought about characteristic behavior patterns which determined personality. The growth of personality is but one of the topics which Dr. and Mrs. Sherman discuss with skill and support with thoroughly convincing data.

THE TERROR-DREAM *by George H. Green* (DUTTON. $1.75)

DR. GREEN'S new book is companion piece to his previous works, *The Day-Dream,* and the widely read *Psychoanalysis in the Class-room.* In this most recent volume, he presents the child's dream of some terrifying experience as a device whereby the child seeks, more or less unconsciously, to bridge the gap between an irksome reality and a wish-fulfilment. Paradoxically, Dr. Green gives equal stress to the physical and psychical bases of dreams. Although prompted by his interest in education to connect the terror-dream in some way with the class-room situation, Dr. Green is compelled to admit that the only connection between the two is that the child addicted to this form of dream is using up much energy in its preoccupation with frustrated wishes and is not, therefore, devoting itself whole-heartedly to study.

YOUR MIND IN ACTION *by Fred A. Moss* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $4.00)

HERE is a well organized, well written book on human behavior. The author reviews the effects upon the human organism of such external factors as climate, season, geographical location and weather; drugs, fatigue due to over-exertion, disease carriers, etc. He discusses sanely variations in behavior attributable to individual differences—race, family, stock, age, sex, experience. In the third section of the volume, Dr. Moss indicates the applicability of psychological principles to various fields of activity, such as medicine, law and pedagogy, advertising, personnel selection and training, politics and social work, manufacturing, marketing and managing. Pictures and descriptions of novel aptitude tests and an unusually comprehensive index enhance the value of Dr. Moss's work.

THE BATTLE OF BEHAVIORISM *by John B. Watson and William MacDougall* (NORTON. $1.00)

THIS addition to the pocket-size *New Science Series* is a transcription of the debate on behaviorism which Drs. MacDougall and Watson held in Washington, D. C., two years ago. Dr. Watson presents his science as the study of all human behavior which can be universally observed and objectively described. Professor MacDougall chooses to examine behaviorism rather than to defend introspectionism; indeed, he maintains that he himself was the first behavioristic psychologist. He selects those flaws in

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behaviorism which have since been widely argued: its ignoring of such concepts as feeling, attention, self-analysis; its denial of incentive, motive and purpose and its insistence upon mechanistic dogma.

THE ANATOMY OF EMOTION *by Edward William Lazell* (CENTURY. $3.00)

DR. LAZELL accepts as his definition of emotion the statement that it is "an active, energizing state of consciousness arising from bodily changes and finding its expression in bodily movement and attitudes". The bodily changes which he considers the origin of all emotion are those due to the functioning of the ductless glands. He assigns to every stage in the development of personality some gland or group of glands which appear to dominate the individual during a given interval in his life. Among the emotions which characterize these stages are fear, anger, hate, self-pity and love; to these orthodox categories Dr. Lazell adds social co-operation or "getting on with others"; critical-mindedness, blame and wanderlust.

THE CHILD'S CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD *by Jean Piaget* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.75)

TO HIS preceding volumes, *Language and Thought of the Child* and *Judgment and Reasoning of the Child,* M. Piaget adds a third important study. By adroit questioning of children between the ages of four-and-a-half and eleven years, he has acquired a knowledge of the child's conception of life and thought, its interpretation of the physical world, its recognition of cause and effect in that world, its ability to differentiate between itself and externality. It is because, generally speaking, the child is unable to distinguish between mental and physical worlds that it attributes life, will and purpose to inanimate objects. In assigning a purpose to everything, the child reveals its tendency to think of objects as if they were made and controlled by man; he ascribes to things that move and "live" the ability to obey a power (*i.e.,* man) whose will they reflect in their very being. M. Piaget's trilogy deserves the careful consideration of professional psychologists and intelligent parents who would really understand the child.


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Around this ironic theme Ellen Glasgow has written her wittiest novel, with the rapier touch of "The Romantic Comedians" and the power of "Barren Ground."



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## *The Social Sciences*

FROM THE PHYSICAL TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES *by Jacques Rueff* (JOHNS HOPKINS. $2.00)

IN THIS rather abstract little volume, which is exquisitely made, M. Rueff outlines the transition from the physical to the social sciences which characterizes the development of scientific method in the latter body of disciplines. He argues that every science comprises the empirical and the rational; the former concerned with phenomena or, rather, with our *sensing* of existing things, the latter concerned with our ascription of meaning, reason and theory to these observed phenomena, so that, "when our theories are 'squeezed' by the reasoning machine, they will yield conclusions coinciding with observed appearances", and that thus the social sciences —psychology, sociology, ethics, economics—are as readily divisible, and as easily organizable along empirical and rational lines, as the physical or "natural" sciences.

THE SOVIET UNION (COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY THE SOVIET UNION INFORMATION BUREAU, WASHINGTON, D. C. $1.50)

THIS compact volume sets forth the newest facts about the U.S.S.R. Its information is officially endorsed by the Bureau at Washington, whose function it is to disseminate news about the Russian experiment. The book is filled with statistics about production, agriculture and trade, terse but engrossing accounts of the homeless children of Russia, the status of women in the new order, and state subsidization of, and proletarian participation in, the arts.

CHICAGO *by Charles Edward Merriam* (MACMILLAN. $3.50)

HERE is an unusual account of the manner in which a city government actually works, as contrasted with the theory of its operation. The author, now professor of political science in the University of Chicago, was at one time unsuccessful candidate for the office of mayor and for many years one of the city's aldermen. He takes us behind the municipal scenes. He explains the background of his city, how it has come to be what it is. He discusses the "Big Fix"—an invisible part of the government which in its heyday could do anything for its favorites; he describes the cross-current influences of fraternal, political, racial and social organizations in the city. Leaders in Chicago party politics move across its pages; there are "Big Bill the Builder", "Uncle Charley" Deneen, "Old George" Brennan, Messrs. Insull and Rosenwald, among others. All city dwellers should, because all city politicians will, read this book.

RATTLING THE CUP ON CHICAGO CRIME *by Edward D. Sullivan* (VANGUARD. $2.00)

AS POLICE reporter, feature writer and sports editor of the *Herald-Examiner,* Mr. Sullivan came to know the "big shots" of Chicago's underworld. Many who are memories move through his pages—Colosimo, the Miller boys, O'Bannion, Little Hymie Weiss and McSwiggin; the reader is let in on the killing of the wild Genna Brothers, Lombardo and the seven men who were chopped—*i.e.,* mowed down by machine guns—in a North Side garage on St. Valentine's day of this year. Some who are still with us figure in first-told anecdotes; chief among them is "Mr." Capone. The book is as interesting as the source of its title. Among jail-inmates, no one, no matter how thirsty, rattles his drinking cup against the bars of his cell to attract the guard's attention. Rattling the cup has come to mean "squawking"; and he who tells is doomed to "ride". A quaint custom, Mr. Sullivan.

PRODIGAL SONS *by Montgomery Evans II* (NORTON. $1.00)

WITH the subtitle, *The Evolution of Caste,* Mr. Evans's little book is a thought-provoking study of the origin of class-consciousness and its growing threat to democracy. The creation of tremendous fortunes may result in the substitution of a plutocracy for the present form of government—unless the millions amassed by a limited group are squandered by its prodigal sons. As an alternative to plutocracy, Mr. Evans suggests the establishment of a technocracy—a state in which government would be a business run by technicians created by selective breeding and specially trained for governmental duties.

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IMPRESSIONS OF SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE REVOLUTIONARY WORLD *by John Dewey* (NEW REPUBLIC. $1.00)

IN THIS slight book Mr. Dewey reveals his reaction to the political, moral, intellectual and educational development in Russia, Turkey, Mexico and China. His account of the movements in these countries toward improved educational programmes is woven into his descriptions of the way in which the citizens of the various republics live. The Russian experiment, Dr. Dewey thinks, is worth watching, inasmuch as it may some day be the example in education for all nations.

THE GOLD COAST AND THE SLUM *by Harvey Warren Zorbaugh* (UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS. $3.00)

PROFESSOR ZORBAUGH'S excellent study of Chicago's Near North Side is proof of the fact that scientific treatment of social phenomena is possible—and interesting. He has indicated, in a fairly objective manner, the many-sided life of that mile-by-a-mile-and-a-half strip of lake front, which embraces the ultra-exclusive Gold Coast, the furnished room area, Hobohemia and Little Sicily. His description of behavior in the various sectors of the locality is studded with vivid documents written by inhabitants of the area; it presents a picture which is true, not only of Chicago, but of any large city in the United States. The volume recounts the rigid Coast code, departure from which means loss of status in the upper stratum of society. It reveals the monotony of boarding house life, the anonymity and loneliness which drive men and women of the lodging houses to indiscretions, to tragic repression of sex hunger, to suicide. It paints the peculiarities of Towertown (Chicago's Greenwich Village); of "the Rialto of the Half World", where thousands of transients seek diversion among its cabarets and speakeasies; of "Bughouse Square", and "Little Hell". The picture indicates the cultural groups which have organized their own little colonies in the city, in which they preserve many of their old-world traits and folkways. Professor Zorbaugh cements his mosaic by a brief, significant interpretation of the urbanization of American life and its attendant problems. His book is well worth while.


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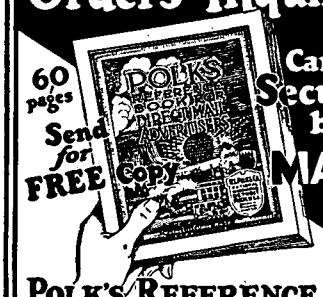

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THE WESTERN WAY *by Frederic J. Stimson* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.50)

THE WESTERN way is the way of Democracy, says Mr. Stimson; we of the New World are committed to it pragmatically, if not by our conviction, and we must take stock of the accomplishments and possibilities of Democracy if it is to fulfill its promise. Democracy was founded, originally, upon complete liberty of the individual from governmental (State) control; it permitted him to live with a minimum amount of interference. But in the United States (and in Great Britain, somewhat) the initial tendency of democratic governments to enact laws has supplanted the tenet of liberty with the doctrine of control. We may live and travel with minimum restriction; we may worship where, when and how we please; but in every other form of activity, from amusement to labor, from contract to divorce, from the payment of taxes to the recording of deaths, the State controls us. That has its advantages. Accepting control as its new basis, American Democracy must avoid the temptation to stress material things and at the same time emphasize its lesson to the world: that it is possible for everyone to have leisure, education, recreation, and the comforts which he wants.

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE *by Jérôme and Jean Tharaud* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $2.00)

EVEN though it is a very brief, broad-stroked history of the Jews in Europe, *The Chosen People* manages to picture the various influences upon and developments within the ghetto during the last six centuries. The authors indicate the self-imposed seclusion of ghetto life from which Maimonides attempted to lift his people; they tell the story of Uriel Acosta's vacillation between cathedral and synagogue and its tragic end; they dwell upon the miracle of Spinoza whom the ghetto cast forth. The Cabbala and its role in the mystic interpretation of the Talmudic Law; the part played in Jewish history by Sabbatai-Zevi, Moses Mendelssohn and Doctor Herzl, father of Zionism; the slow dissolution of ghetto life before a bewildering freedom for the Jew; these and other topics make interesting reading. The Tharauds have written charmingly and well.

THE PEOPLE OF TIBET *by Sir Charles Bell* (OXFORD. $7.00)

IN AN earlier work, *Tibet: Past and Present,* Sir Charles Bell revealed a comprehensive knowledge of the history of Tibet. In this volume he discloses an intimate knowledge of its everyday life—peasants, beggars, merchants, traders and robbers, all dressed in their characteristic costumes doing their customary work. The reader meets the nobility and the priests of the country; he visits farm, market and home; he attends weddings, funerals, religious and civic ceremonies. He hears, as he turns the pages, the whir of the Wheel of Life in this amazing land.

SOCIETY AND ITS PROBLEMS *by Grove S. Dow* (CROWELL. $3.00)

PROFESSOR DOW has completely revised his original work of 1920 and has added considerable new material to the wealth of data in that first volume. He begins with a discussion of the nature of sociology and the factors involved in the study of society—environment, heredity, culture. He dissects the problems of poverty, crime, the breakdown of social institutions, education and social control; he considers the many implications for society of modern movements of population from country to country, and from rural to urban communities. Throughout his discussion of social change and problems, he reveals a characteristic optimism and faith in the present social order, founded on the intelligence with which he believes society is attempting to solve its many important questions.

## *Essays and Criticism*

LITERARY ETHICS *by H. M. Paull* (DUTTON. $3.75)

A COMPREHENSIVE survey of the various forms which dishonesty in literature can take and has taken—forgery, piracy, plagiarism, the pure hoax, the use without credit of a novel by the movie scenarist, etcetera. The title of this excellent and valuable book is misleading, since there is almost no discussion of the actual ethical points involved, and no philosophical conclusions are drawn.

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## *Miscellaneous*

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PORTRAIT PAINTERS *by Cuthbert Lee* (RUDGE. $15.00)

IN THIS volume, the trade edition of which will appear later in the season under the imprint of W. W. Norton and Company, some four dozen examples of beautiful aquatone reproduction are to be found. Cuthbert Lee has gathered together representative portraits by fifty Americans, most of whom have attained a high place not only in this branch of art, but in landscape painting, in illustration and even in sculpture. Each portrait is accompanied by a gracefully worded comment from Mr. Lee on the artist's life and attainments. The collection affords such diversity of talent as George de Forest Brush, Robert W. Vonnoh, Albert Sterner, Cecilia Beaux, Raymond P. R. Neilson, Karl Anderson and Jean MacLane. Considered solely as a specimen of fine printing, this latest offering from the house of William Edwin Rudge is valuable. In addition, it provides—as no other book has even attempted to provide—a competent and entertaining guide to the field of portraiture as it is cultivated in present-day America.

EASTERN WINDOWS *by Elizabeth Keith* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $7.50)

MISS KEITH is an internationally known English artist who has travelled in the Far East. The twelve "windows" comprising her views of Korea, Japan and the Philippines, are reproduced from water colors, color etchings and color woodcuts, in which art she is as much at home as the Japanese are. The accompanying text—excerpts from letters to her sister, written while on her travels—is in the sensitive prose of an artist. Altogether a glowing book, rich in color.

AN ACADEMY FOR GROWN HORSEMEN *by Geoffrey Gambado* (RUDGE. $15.00)

A FACSIMILE reprint of a book first published in 1787. With its "Completest Instructions for Walking, Trotting, Cantering, Galloping, Stumbling, and Tumbling", it is as spontaneous a bit of humor, both in text and in illustration, as exists in any sporting library. The author, Geoffrey Gambado—or, to give him his real name, William Henry Bunbury—a member of the English gentry in the latter Eighteenth Century, was a sportsman-artist, and, as this book testifies, a rare wit. His twelve copper plates are further enhanced by two new illustrations from a Twentieth Century sporting artist, Gordon Ross.

DEEP-SEA BUBBLES, OR THE CRUISE OF THE ANNA LOMBARD, *by Henry H. Bootes* (APPLETON. $3.00)

THIS book smells of oakum and tar. It is a seagoing narrative of the sort that only salt-rimed Britishers can write. Carrying the reader through a disjointed and often improbable series of adventures, with characters only half real, the author makes his ships and scenes of shipping alive with action and nautical color. A story of no literary pretensions, in the Captain Marryat-William Clark Russell tradition, *Deep-Sea Bubbles* is packed with sea lore and authentic pictures of sailing-ship life. I do not know where one could find a more graphic picture of the last days of the great square-riggers than in the panorama of the Thames and the Downs that the author depicts as the *Anna Lombard* drops down from London Pool to the Channel. He evokes by name almost every vessel, every tug, every barge; until one stands fascinated, in a confusion of rasping blocks, twanging rigging, rattling anchor chains, shouts, hails and splashing of hundreds of craft. A mysterious whaling voyage is the basis of the narrative, but the true enjoyment of the book is not for the story-reader—it is for him who knows and loves ships.

FAMOUS AMERICAN DUELS *by Don C. Seitz* (CROWELL. $3.50)

WITH the exception of the tragic meeting between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, few Americans know of the many duels that were fought by their countrymen for personal and political reasons. Mr. Seitz has dug up from indisputable sources a number of interesting cases, set them against the proper historical background and has given us a series of picturesque sketches of such famous Americans as Andrew Jackson, whose fiery disposition got him into quarrels or duels with over a hundred

(CONTINUED ON PAGE XXI)

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THE BOOKMAN

*Edited by Seward Collins*

AUGUST, 1929 VOL. LXIX; NO. 6

# A DECADE OF AMERICAN FICTION

*by Kenneth Burke*

Though we still hear of dissatisfaction with the status of art in America, art is a major industry. Hundreds of thousands of skilled workmen are dependent for their sustenance upon the output of a comparatively negligible band of artists. When we consider how much union labor goes into the reproduction and distribution of some erratic gentleman's paragraphs, we may conclude that the frailest of esthetic temperaments is providing, thus indirectly, a livelihood for at least ten stalwart heads of families. And though our countrymen are told constantly that they despise art, they go on constantly showing that they love it. Between the hours of five and twelve P. M., the United States of America is devoted exclusively to transit and art, the transit being patronized by the art-goers. In the midst of much talk about working under pressure, we go on augmenting the specified hours of leisure—and for leisure, art is the only alternative to overeating, immorality and suicide.

With good art, the situation is less encouraging. But perhaps good art is merely a by-product of bad art, a notable deviation from the sounder average stock, a sport. I have never understood what would be gained by having the populace prefer Shakespeare to the Broadway school of drama. Good art is for people who cannot be satisfied with bad art And profusion offers the best likelihood of important deviations, as the many purchasers of cheap records have enabled the perfecting of a mechanism whereby we may, at our pleasure, turn on Stokowsky playing Brahms.

That set of trivial magazines on the counter of the country drug store—do not abhor it, for it is culture. Culture is a state of society wherein one can save for eighteen volumes of Thomas Aquinas, if he will, while his neighbors are studying Hearst. As the world sleeps, with such at its pillow, you may enjoy the extreme prerogative of being left alone. The natural-born marauders are reading bad books, the lions are being milk-fed, while you are at peace to consider "a preserving and amassing of genius such as the world has never known before". Documents upon any aspect of speculation or sensibility are readily obtainable.



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And we rejoice that there have been many bad books in the last ten years, for they constitute our guaranty that there have been some good ones. Yet in singling out the superior, we should not be gentle. A book which merits encouragement for a season may require vilification for a decade, and praise is best sharpened with slander.

Perhaps we should consider first, to dismiss the sooner, Thornton Wilder. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* can be sacrificed without loss. In its own way it says, "The scroll, my lord". Its fatalism seems specious, trivial and even dishonest, as though consistency in the Maker's ways were trumped up to serve the ends of plot. *The Cabala* is much better, though questionable in that general air of selectness which it has in common with the society novels of writers like Marcel Prévost, Marcelle Tinayre, Henri Bordeaux, Henri de Régnier and Paul Bourget. We find the phrase of music or the line of a painting mentioned with easy familiarity which takes for granted the reader's deep acquaintance with the fashionable in art. And the work is vitiated at the close by that superficial coquetting with the mystic which mars *The Bridge* as a whole.

For one gift, Wilder is to be cherished. I refer, in *The Cabala,* to his succession of essays upon the various characters of his book. A queer, cracked lot, assembled in their oddity with considerable tact, they are described as in the lively letters of some traveller or visitor whose leisure among fountains and avenues leaves many energies unclaimed. "The Princess," he says, "was astonished to find such quiet mastery in a woman without a *de* and the Signora was amazed to find the same quality in a noblewoman." This is parlor talk of distinction, and *The Cabala* has much of it. Good examples of his characterizations could be chosen almost at random:

> So I led her up to Dame Edith Steuert, Mrs. Edith Foster Prichard Steuert, author of Far From Thy Ways, I Strayed, the greatest hymn since Newman's. Daughter, wife, sister, what not, of clergymen, she lived in the most exciting currents of Anglicanism. Her conversation ran on vacant livings and promising young men from Shropshire, and on the editorials in the latest *St. George's Banner* and *The Anglican Cry*. She sat on platforms and raised subscriptions and got names. She seemed to be forever surrounded by a ballet of curates and widows who at her word, rose and swayed and passed the scones. For she was the author of the greatest hymn of modern times and gazing at her one wondered when the mood could have struck this loud conceited woman, the mood that had prompted those eight verses of despair and humility. The hymn could have been written by Cowper, that gentle soul exposed to the flame of an evangelism too hot even for negroes. For one minute in her troubled girlhood all the intermittent sincerity of generations of clergymen must have combined in her, and late at night, full of dejections she could not understand, she must have committed to her diary that heartbroken confession. Then the fit was over, and over forever.

This is vivacious epitome, and it is a trick which enlivens the whole of *The Cabala*. Still, the book dies with its plot, after giving us a kind of hypothetical reality which has not gone far enough into fancy to entertain us speculatively (as does a work like Hudson's *A Crystal Age*), yet is too inventive for service as a formulation of life. The artist pronounces some number. Giving uniformity to many complex factors, he produces the typifying of an attitude. In the novel this is most often, but not invariably, done with the medium of a character. A posture like that of Childe Harold or a character like Julien Sorel contains a code of conduct beyond the limits of the fiction. Wilder, from this standpoint, does not qualify.

To take apart Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises,* after having read it with enjoyment, is to be aghast. We find that we have read about people taking baths and getting haircuts, having another drink and giving tips to the coatman. Three people converse negligibly with one another, whereupon we learn

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without protest that two of them were "in fine form" that day. We watch Americans doing pleasantly in Europe all sorts of low-powered things which chroniclers of the same events in America would detail with venom and despair. We see people, vaguely cultured, whom we know to be cultured by their rigorous avoidance of all cultural topics. Hemingway provides appeal for a kind of idealized, international philandering, the trivialities of selfish and complacent people, a somewhat cut-throat crowd, whose familiarity with one another is founded upon too flimsy a basis. In this Hollywood conception of glory, no difficult thing is advocated, if we except the discipline and refinement required to behold and appraise the bullfight. Here is the "lost generation", contentedly lost. The book is particularly to be recommended to eager young girls with occasional yearnings, who associate brilliance with a rather sunny and literate form of idleness, who would like to imagine a world in which enjoyment comes easy and who, above all, have not yet been to Europe. For such reasons, I enjoyed it.

Hemingway's power of continuity in *The Sun Also Rises* is exceptional. Things follow one another with no suggestion of abruptness, a result rare in a writer whose observations are so keenly stated, since emphasis upon one fact makes for its division from the next. His short, easily riding sentences form a sure succession of narrative statements, a minimum of psychology, a maximum of behavior. Yet the hero can be a thinker. Hear him, on Page 153:

> I thought I had paid for everything. Not like the woman pays and pays and pays. No idea of retribution or punishment. Just exchange of values. You gave up something and got something else. Or you worked for something. You paid some way for everything that was any good. I paid my way into enough things that I liked, so that I had a good time. Either you paid by learning about them, or by experience, or by taking chances, or by money. Enjoying living was learning to get your money's worth and knowing when you had it. You could get your money's worth. The world was a good place to buy it. It seemed like a fine philosophy. In five years, I thought, it will seem just as silly as all the other fine philosophies I've had.

Hemingway weeds out much that is pious, or pompous; he is a good corrective, as good a corrective as listening in the street. His enthusiasm is naturally reserved for the bulls. His bullfights are scrupulous in their bloodiness—indeed, his most eager writing is expended upon the display of subtleties in the physical, where subtlety has been least exploited. At such times he is most observant and lyrical. He proves that if rock-crushing had its genius, it could be subdivided into as many gradations of experience as late love.

Of his short stories, we advocate particularly "The Undefeated", in *Men Without Women,* the spectacle of a moth-eaten toreador, expending a fiercety of determination, fighting for the recovery of past greatness and being dragged, step by step, to defeat, while the crowd looks on without sympathy. As though under glass, we watch this brutal discrepancy between efforts and results. It is Hemingway's "starkness" at his best, the employment of strong-arm methods heretofore reserved for a lower order of fiction.

There are some writers who, while the tenor of their work is admirable, manage to produce no one thing in which their best qualities converge. Despite their excellence as artists, they can claim no outstanding book. There are others whose average of attainment is lower, yet who have hit happily upon one anthology number. *The Time of Man,* by Elizabeth Madox Roberts, is far enough beyond *My Heart and My Flesh* and *Jingling in the Wind* to have been written by a different person. The *Jingling* suggests something of Chaucer, *Candide* and *Alice in Wonderland,* but remains a book of no great moment despite its distinguished antecedents. It is appealing in its literary sophistication, its incidental sallies into the picturesque. In

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*My Heart and My Flesh,* we remain unmoved by the heroine's aberrations, which are conveyed less by psychological disclosure than by tricks of presentation, particularly the peopling of the brain with altercating voices, conversing as in the dialogue of a play and destroying the illusion of reality by means of a form to which the illusion of reality is essential. But Miss Roberts's *The Time of Man* marks a flowering of the local-color novel. Her rustic heroine, necessarily sensitive beyond her station, is followed through a homely tragedy which recovers for us the feel of courage and our rage against injustice. One distinctly participates. Glenway Wescott has commented upon the beauty she distills out of the Kentucky dialect. This diction, though serving the ends of realism, arouses pleasures which are almost those of fantasy. Miss Roberts handles colloquial conversation with a tact undreamed of by Eugene O'Neill. The talk is as some distortion of speech might be if it were undertaken by an inventor with much linguistic subtlety, distortion made in the interests of a future form of beauty. And the heroine's monologues, as they rise out of a narrative episode to end a chapter in zealous philosophizing, seem to be a personal discovery of the author.

Conrad Aiken is of that class whose level of production is high, while the single outstanding product is still lacking. There is about Aiken some of that interest in death and desiccation which distinguishes Eliot, and which usually coexists with selectness and sparsity of output. Yet Aiken is unloosed —his work, wide in its intellectual range but narrow emotionally, attains profuse embodiment. He can extract a common quality out of varied experiences. Thus, in reading his *Blue Voyage,* one has the satisfaction of a formula intricately repeated. The formula represents a man who has derived strong moral predispositions from his upbringing, but who has intellectually superimposed upon himself a dismissal of all such emotional investments. The result is a kind of hilarious morbidity; and the hero Demarest, despite his able equipment, is without dignity, unless we can find dignity in vacillation and the willingness to admit anything. Aiken might even be somewhat of a martyr—for I believe that he is striving for a set of post-Freudian moral judgments, trying to uncover what *the good* might be if we begin with the premise that all our mental processes are trivial. Thus, *Blue Voyage* sets soberly to work focusing much sensitivity and education upon amatory engrossments which could, by another artist, easily be made farcical. Demarest is a Puritan unhorsed. He is quick to confuse the female ankle with meditations upon abstruse metaphysical destinies. The flirtatious wenches on this boat are considered and observed by a protagonist who believes himself an erotomaniac simply because he happens to ponder upon sex for twenty-four hours a day. Yet the content of his thinking might argue a denial of his claim, proving him an observer, an outsider, who has been caught by the sexual symbol owing to its present somewhat arbitrary association with communion. His meditations are in constant deviation from their sexual starting-point, though Demarest chooses to interpret them in terms of their beginnings rather than in terms of their tangential escapes.

Regardless of wide differences, we might note one striking similarity between *Blue Voyage* and Waldo Frank's *The Dark Mother.* Aiken, like Frank, uses the technical subterfuge of projecting his characters beyond themselves. By which I mean that, after each author has shown us his characters in their realistic, more or less unexpressive guise, he transports them hypothetically to a plane of intelligence and eloquence, allows them to discuss the mainsprings of their nature with one another, converts their realism into allegory and gives us an orgiastic fraternization such as the composer of the *Choral Symphony* might have taken delight in.

In *Blue Voyage,* Aiken has dispensed with protective dignity. His claim to respect seems

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to lie, not in reticence, not in such "uncontemporaneous" methods as Racinean elimination, but in the brightness of his disclosures. Here, it is not the form, but the law, that excludes. And the burden of his scepticism, in this book which is built about a transatlantic voyage, is lifted by that feeling of expectancy which is a large element in the psychology of travel. By way of happy ending, the book closes characteristically with Demarest entering for the first time the illicit cabin. It is a dingy homecoming.

Can we, in this review of fiction, include *The Enormous Room* of E. E. Cummings? For, though founded upon the recording of actual events, the author's incarceration in a French detention camp, it bears the marks of arrant fictionizing, might in fact even be described as the art of fabrication, the romanticizing of the realistic, the documentary lie. This is not reporting, this charitable eye for excrement, this ability to see everything startlingly, these distortions of one who, instructed to hold a mirror up to nature, obediently procured his mirror from a laughing gallery. The one thing we can know of the people in that enormous room is that they are not as Cummings asserts them to be. They have been converted into their super-selves by a freakish imagination necessarily compelled to expatiate upon its environment, pleased to read an event into happenings which, without such interpretive enterprise, would have been uneventful. Even in suffering, this quality of mind forces its owner upon a lark.

Cummings, to depict his object, assails it with a whole broadside of data; he overwhelms it; like a cartoonist, he industriously seeks the distortion of its every particular. He will look at a stomach, and find a belly; at a face and find a mug; at a chin and find three chins. It is the method of Gross. And unlike Frank, he uses the connotations of humor, to which distorting is proper.

His descriptions are often more vigorous than revealing. There is saliency for its own sake. The vigor of description may transcend its object and, even as the picture grows dim, leave us with a tingle of vigorous description. But the haze of the individual characters, which arises despite an exhaustive dwelling upon their details, assists in conveying a mass impression of the enormous room itself. Its occupants are indefinite but, as an aggregate, their swarming identity is established.

Cummings can hate irresponsibly, as in his ferocious attacks upon a non-existent *gouvernement français*. And he can praise irresponsibly. He can dote upon Jean Le Nègre, the royal beast in this enormous room, without submitting his judgments to the final consistency of permanent companionship. He is, after all, leaving. He can rhetorically pray for their meeting in death (another enormous room, be it observed) without worrying about the fact that they would have little in common for the years intervening. He possesses fortunate irresponsibility—somewhat as adolescents can be absolute in the criticism of their elders, can be uncompromising, through not yet having had to face compromise. We follow him through this freshness, through much joyous misery, ending in a return to prosperity, comfort, assured well-being:

> My God, what an ugly island. Hope we don't stay here long. All the redbloods first-class much excited about land. Damned ugly, I think.
>
> Hullo.
>
> The tall, impossibly tall, incomparably tall, city shoulderingly upward into hard sunlight leaned a little through octaves of its parallel edges, leaningly strode upward into firm hard snowy sunlight; the noises of America nearingly throbbed with smokes and hurrying dots which are men and which are women and which are things new and curious and hard and strange and vibrant and immense, lifting with a great ondulous stride into immortal sunlight. . . .

At times I have wished that all literature were like the music of Bach, never descending below the level of inventiveness. When nothing else is happening, the manipulation of the medium should reward our attention, providing the inarticulate reader with inar-

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ticulate delight and the analytic one with material for swift analysis. Cummings in *The Enormous Room* does meet this requirement. Though, sometimes, he relies upon slang paraphrase—and when he speaks of going through a door haughtily, "using all the perpendicular inches God has given me," we know that he has *drawn himself up to his full height.* But there is always ebullience. The author strives that the reader may relax. Should one open the book at random, wherever the eye falls the page comes to life. Granted that the life is not invariably beyond our protest—that it might often be a better quality of life—the buoyancy is to be found throughout and promptly declares itself.

Wescott is a writer of short stories. *Good-bye Wisconsin* is avowedly a collection of short stories; and his two novels, *The Apple of the Eye* and *The Grandmothers,* are sequences of short stories in disguise. Perhaps one of the best examples of his suggestive method is "The Whistling Swan", the piece which ends *Good-bye Wisconsin.* We see a young musician, who is in Wisconsin after having been subsidized abroad. There is a young girl, who loves him with a certain disturbing awe. He is trying to decide whether to remain, or to make new plans for a return to Paris. While walking in the woods, with a gun and his indecision, he comes upon a swan, which startles him and which he shoots almost before thinking. Indecision vanishes. He will remain. In the shooting of the bird, felled in a flutter of expert prose, he slays a portion of himself, that portion which was drawing him to Paris. Wescott suggests—we are at liberty to complete the psychology. An aspect of the hero's self is externalized, and he slays it. The event may be taken, not as the cause of his reversal, but as the paralleling of it. That which occurs within, by the dark and devious channels of decision, he duplicates without as the destruction of a swan. Following this symbolic elimination, he is prepared to remain, to marry, and let our gentle girl become indispensable to him.

There is a sweetly morbid effect in Wescott, as when, in *The Grandmothers,* he discusses past romance in the presence of old age. "The October afternoon on which she was buried, among her relations and his own, mingled in his memory with the afternoons of her girlhood." As we read of his pioneers, we feel that this vast continent was peopled in gloom; where there is enthusiasm, it is seen through the despair and envy of another, or in the melancholy of retrospect. He writes of Grandfather Tower: "His beard was parted in the middle, and fell on each side of a large bone button in his shirt collar; his rheumatic hands were clenched; and wherever he went, he seemed to be elbowing aside invisible people on his way." Similarly, in *The Apple of the Eye,* he takes a charming character from us, showing her body carrion after we had learned much of her difficult ways of feeling. And his short stories hint vaguely of corruption, corruption which even gains moment by being vaguely hinted.

Wescott gives the impression of one whose written frankness is kept suavely in arrears of his understanding; he diverges from his readers with discretion; determined neither to give offense nor to leave the offensive unsaid, he is necessarily unctuous. Westcott tells old stories. It is part of his success. To the circumambient he adds suavity. His pages, being liquid, flow. They flow through the mind, merging into one another, making perfect conformity. Plot and the statement of an attitude are, by his ways, skilfully interchangeable; neither is a digression from the other; both are aspects of a method essentially lyrical.

Waldo Frank we dare omit. Yet we recognize his great seriousness, recognize him even as a prophetic writer who could view with bitterness the spectacle of his work being incorporated elsewhere, piece by piece, not by plagiarists, but by artists who have in their own manner arrived at his results. Such men as Anderson we dare omit for other reasons: they have been amply appraised.

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We regret the silence of Jean Toomer, after his early volume, *Cane,* a work showing the influence of Frank and Anderson jointly. Toomer takes the business of fiction very earnestly and is, perhaps, hindered temporarily by the desire to incorporate greater complexity into his work. There are many aspects of experience which must undergo a discipline of esthetic trickery before they can serve the purposes of lyric prose. And Toomer, essentially Negro in his inspiration, would surely never be content to let the singing quality depart from his work.

Paul Rosenfeld's *The Boy in the Sun* shows to advantage the impressionistic treatment which the author applies with less fitness in his criticism. Perhaps it reflects the influence of Frank in that the metaphor, the image, tends to supplant psychological analysis. Since his adolescent is left at the end, still living, and even walking "through the cold spring evening", we dare entertain the possibility of a sequel, treating of a treacherous passage from wonder to acceptance.

In *Manhattan Transfer,* John Dos Passos abandons his earlier, descriptive style for the methods of a playwright. Out of blunt materials—beaneries, seduction in the slums, low-visioned ambitions, thefts, brawls, dirty tricks—the author accumulates a grimy, but easily recognizable metropolis. Dos Passos contributes a new quickness to narrative, by a succession of pointed episodes, lives glimpsed preferably at moments of change or decision. Each event is thus a kind of miniature peripety, a plot at some culminating stage. His book affords us no new enlightenment, but it rises to the category of excellence through the sheer efficiency by which it represents its genre. The dishes-in-the-sink tradition is here carried to fulfilment.

We should also mention the appearance of Jonathan Leonard's novel, *Back to Stay.* Leonard first attracted attention when a long story of his was published in *The Second American Caravan.* With his love of oddity, his peculiar preciosity in the linking of statement and answer, his pleasant glibness, readers who seek too exclusively in novels the sense of reality might find him disappointing. Dramatic situations are allowed to trickle away, sapped by the author's and his characters' perverse gift of loquacity. But by this loss, the flavor of his repartee is more emphasized.

We shall not venture upon the future. There seems little indication of any pronounced change. We might wish for the decease of the gossip novel, as having been written frequently enough. We might plead the obligations of history, maintaining that the accumulations in this medium are sufficient. We might hope to see local color become a less important aspect of fiction, on the grounds that it can hardly be done better than it has been done by many men long since dead. We might prefer to find the greater stressing of fiction as a literary experience, a speculative activity, a method of inquiry, rather than as a form of vicarious living. Meanwhile, there are advantages in the possession of these technicians who can entertain thee, at mealtimes, on the boulevards and by thy pillow, with able and compliant prose.

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# ANNE DOUGLAS SEDGWICK AND HER NOVELS

*by Esther Forbes*

THE name of Sedgwick has long been associated with the pleasant Berkshire village of Stockbridge. Here, in the middle of the last century, bearers of this name were friends of Hawthorne, of Herman Melville and certain Transcendental philosophers who flourished somewhat spasmodically in sight of Greylock and by the waters of the Housatonic. Now this region has become more fashionable, but still the bright air, the rugged outline of hills and mountains, the quick springs and the long-drawn golden falls suggest a way of life at once frugal and beautiful. It was this rich, yet temperate life that the writers of half a century ago sought to find. To this end Melville left New York, and Hawthorne the cobblestones of Salem. The Sedgwicks of Stockbridge definitely stood for the rare thing the landscape promised. Here they lived as well-to-do gentry, lucky in their countryside and in their friends. From them came Ellery Sedgwick, the present editor of *The Atlantic Monthly,* and several other distinguished people. Closely allied to them in blood is Anne Douglas Sedgwick.

Her father is George Stanley Sedgwick who, at the time of her birth, lived in Englewood, New Jersey, commuting to New York. Her mother was Mary Douglas of Chillicothe, Ohio. When she was nine her family left this country permanently. From then on London was their home. What impresses a child of nine so vividly that she never forgets? ". . . a starry, scintillating sky on a snowy night, a Christmas tree . . . orchards and gardens, where I and my sisters played in summer." That is almost all that now remains of those first nine years of Englewood and Irvington-on-Hudson. British critics never argue whether or not Anne Douglas Sedgwick is English. Obviously to them she is. But many American writers have put forward what seem to me rather thin claims for her Americanism.

Why not create for her a third estate? Not quite British, not quite American. She would have illustrious company among the *déracinés*—James McNeill Whistler and Henry James, T. S. Eliot and John Singer Sargent. It is conceivable that some American families could move to England with a nine-year-old child, and by the time she was grown she would have utterly forgotten the land of her origin. This could not have been the case with the Sedgwicks. They were too deeply rooted to be transplanted without a wrench, and the growing child must have been very conscious of this expatriation of her parents. Her stories are largely concerned with the adjustments of Americans and English, of French and English, of (in one case at least) Germans and Americans. And the American abroad. This subject is a continual delight to her, as it was to Henry James. Her books are usually full of Americans of the self-righteous, reforming type. One of these women (the mother in *Paths of Judgment*) she



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refers to as "highly educated but vastly ignorant", which description would suit a number of her pedantic and charmless Americans. It is because she concerns herself so much with the expatriate that I should class her with them, for logically, it seems to me, if you live in a country from the time you are nine you have a right to be considered wholly native—unless that country happens to be China or India or some land you do not wish to have adopt you.

Mr. Sedgwick gave his children a life of dignity, charm and balance. Little girls walked sedately in those days, but none the less joyously. Well chosen governesses directed their steps to the Old South Kensington Museum, to the National Gallery. And there were, for growing girls, innocent and charming Gilbert and Sullivan operas to see, and if you were a hero-worshipper by nature you might thrill at the sight of lovely Lily Langtry stepping in and out of her neat brougham, cantering past you in Rotten Row. You might even spend an hour or two twisting your hair into what was apt to be a poor imitation of the famous Langtry buns. The endearing old ugliness of London is gone now, so Anne Douglas Sedgwick tells us. "There were giants in those days" or, rather, there were the horse-buses plodding up an unwidened Piccadilly, and hansom cabs, and the voice of the muffin-man crying his wares. All gone, quite gone, that grandmotherly London of forty years ago. Even the fogs today are not so black.

In her earliest teens she spent a summer with her mother's family in southern Ohio. It puzzles her today to read American novels of the Middle West. How different are her own memories of this often maligned section. The Emersonian flavor of life, the love of books and nature. Grandfather's well-stocked library, in which on rainy days the little girl could rummage from cupboards where the *Spectator* and Littell's *Living Age* were kept to high shelves, where memoirs of certain famous Frenchmen were almost, but not quite, hidden. And the negro servants too, smiling, cheerful, lovable. She still has a great affection for the race because of those she knew in her grandmother's kitchen. One night her grandfather showed her, by the light of a lantern, the beautiful emergence of a frail green locust from its case. This she never forgot, nor the Catalpa tree showering down white and pink blossoms upon the veranda roof. At least until a few years ago this old home place was still owned by the Douglas family. An uncle, Clifford Douglas, lived there then and perhaps still does.

Back again in London, she continued her life of music, pictures, people, books. By the time she was eighteen it would seem that she had found her *métier*. She would be an artist. To forward this end, she went to Paris. She proved an interested but not *very* ardent student. She loved Paris and France. She has always loved Paris and France. Her five years as a somewhat amateur art student were far from wasted, for she found herself and her own real ability, which lay in writing rather than in painting. In those days—in the 'nineties—Paris had an incomparable prestige for artists and art students. Those were the days of Julian and Carolus Duran. In those days Manet's "Olympe" and the work of the Impressionists were the points of discussion. Many of the reverent seigneurs of the Old Salon were exhibiting, teaching, exerting wide influence. The very year the young girl landed in Paris, Bouguereau is down in the Salon catalogue for a "Love in a Shower", which can be imagined. Classicism, which proved so false a god, was still well intrenched. I like to think of the pretty, intelligent young girl going from gallery to gallery, dressed, I hope, in one of those short sealskin sacks that look so charming in pictures of the period, and a little hat and a veil —du Maurier has drawn this costume charmingly.

There were the Monets, the Manets and the Degases, and all the strange, sometimes rather fuzzy, excitement of the new. There

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were the Bouguereaus and the Cabanels, those elaborate, sensual and, at least to us, tasteless, historical reconstructions. In the 'nineties you had to choose which to follow—the academic or the new. Undoubtedly the young girl chose the new. My evidence is the type of picture she says her first heroine painted: those half-turned heads, those luminous, diffusing lights, the simplicity, the actuality, of Hilda Archinard's work suggest what it was her creator admired. Which brings us to the year 1898 and the publication of her first novel. I should like to read the novel she would write today about this same Paris that forms the background of *The Dull Miss Archinard*. It was the Paris of Oscar Wilde and du Maurier, and it exists with charm in the pages of this first novel. The author feels no particular pride in the story today. "A very feeble little affair," she calls it, "that I trust no one will ever wish to re-read."

Conceive of a *Rose in Bloom* written by a Henry James and you get something of the quality. It has a fresh and girlish charm. In this first book there are many indications of the ways in which its author would go. It shows that, at twenty-two, Anne Douglas Sedgwick was already very interested in the problems of the expatriate. The Archinards are English people living in Paris, but the mother is twice removed from her native soil, being American by birth and British by marriage. She is a volitional invalid, and although she seems to the world sweet, patient and harmless, she is by her selfishness capable of doing considerable damage to those who love her. She is not fully developed in this story, but is a type of woman who under many individual guises appears fairly often in this writer's books. It would be interesting to know what lies behind this selection of certain types by an author. Why in the works of Anne Douglas Sedgwick is the "good" person either so charmless, like poor Adrienne Toner or little Franklin Winslow Kane, or so thoroughly malignant like Tante and Imogen Upton? And why are these charmless or malignant professional "good" people so invariably American? Tante herself is the only one I can think of who is not. Another general type which appears in this first book, and whom we are to meet again, is the wise, disillusioned, somewhat older man who stands back a little from the scene and views all things straight, although everyone else in the novel is taken in. Roger Oldmeadow in *Adrienne Toner* and Gregory Jardine in *Tante* belong to the same general category as the thoughtful widower in *The Dull Miss Archinard*.

The method of presentation used in the first book is typical of those to follow. There is the same absorption in the characters, the same charm of dialogue. In speaking of her method, Anne Douglas Sedgwick said a few years ago (and obviously the same method was used from the beginning):

> My books always start with a *person*—imaginary always, yet often to be traced to past memories: I usually see their faces very clearly, and then a scene—a room where they are. The background rises to fit and explain them and the situation to express them. I never begin with a biographical sketch. I have the whole story in my mind before I begin—what it is to *mean* and *end* in, and I usually start with the first chapter and write straight through, going back in loops, as it were, to rewrite, and forward to grasp essential scenes that often rise up dominatingly and can't wait until their time comes: the *key* scenes are thus usually written before the book really ends, and give me points to work to—I write and rewrite three or four times, and of course the book is often greatly altered before I am satisfied that I have done with my idea all that I can do.

There is one scene in this first book which I have found quite unforgettable. It is when a little girl, to please the man who she thinks has saved her life, recites the death of Arcite from Chaucer. There is an ineffaceable impression of sweetness and sadness to the scene. "The far away tale, the far away

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tongue, the nearness of the pathos—how well the monotonous little voice suited its melancholy." When Arcite dies "Allone, with-outen any companye" there is a foreshadowing of tragedy for the child herself which the rest of the book hardly justifies.

After the Paris sojourn, a picture of hers having been hung in the *Champ de Mars* Salon and her first novel having been published, she returned once more to her father's house in London, uncommonly decked with honors for a girl in her early twenties.

We may suppose, I think, that the artistic career was fairly definitely abandoned, and from the return to London she devoted herself largely to her novels and her many friends. She had always been a great reader. While in Paris she had discovered the Russian writers, beautifully translated into French. *War and Peace,* which introduced her to the Russians, she read at eighteen. It is still her favorite book. It was natural that her temperament should be attracted by Meredith and James. She read the latter "with delight", the former with "delight mixed with exasperation". It has often been said that she was a disciple of James, for her earlier novels especially remind one of the earlier James. The fact that both so often deal with clashes of temperament, with women of superior intelligence, and with the expatriated, perhaps makes this resemblance seem greater than it actually is. James, like Anne Douglas Sedgwick, was sensitive, witty, intelligent, reacting to the same world—a world of amusing, well-bred people, often with a strong background of the Continent, sometimes with a memory of America. Besides James there is another influence one hears about—her training as an artist. She herself considers this unimportant to her as a novelist. It is probably only that there is a reservoir in her which might be drawn upon in various ways. She has innately the power to observe, the desire to arrange what she observes into artistic form. This may be done on canvas or in a book. Or in a short story. She has proved herself a master in this field, but for lack of space I am confining myself to the even more interesting novels. Undoubtedly she is right when she minimizes both these "influences".

Her next book was *The Confounding of Camelia,* and three years later, *The Rescue.* But between the second and third book she had been twice in America, long visits of six months each. She has not been back to America since, and people who know her doubt that she will ever come. She dreads the sea voyage. The literary teas that would be given in her honor, the lecture platforms that would yawn for her, would be no inducement. She likes a life of ease, beauty, privacy and dignity, and there are hair-raising legends abroad in England as to what America does to those whom she delighteth to honor. In those two long visits to America she saw the country of her birth "with a foreigner's eyes but an American heart". "New York, Boston, Washington, southern Ohio again, and the beautiful New England country—impressions are far too many, but the main was of exhilaration and happiness." She already had many American friends and with these visits she made more and kept in touch with the old ones. She has a tremendous capacity for friendship—one of those unusual people who seem to have a genius for it. She is a voluminous and charming correspondent.

Her next book, published in 1904, is bitterer, stronger stuff than any of the earlier ones. The *Paths of Judgment* shows a succession of lies and weakness, leading to suicide. There is, however, a certain ruggedness to the book which shows the author is not really in danger of over-delicacy, over-fragility, possible thinness, as one might fear from the earlier books. Three years later came *A Fountain Sealed,* a book of infinitely greater scope than any of its predecessors. This appeared shortly before her marriage, and soon afterward came the now almost forgotten *Amabel Channice.*

Sometime before this a young English scholar had glowingly reviewed one of her

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novels. He was a staff writer on an English review. She was pleased with his appreciation and wrote to thank him. Correspondence began, a meeting followed. Basil de Sélincourt and Anne Douglas Sedgwick were married in 1908. The de Sélincourts are English, although of French blood and traditions. One brother, Hugh, is a novelist. Ernest de Sélincourt is an eminent professor at Oxford and an authority on Shelley. Basil de Sélincourt himself is, among other things, poetry critic for the *Times* and the author of a number of scholarly books, including his well-known *Walt Whitman*. He had already written a book on Giotto before he was married. Leaving London they settled (not too far away from their many friends) in the Cotswolds. Their house, because it stood a little removed from the rest of the village (a village of thatched roofs and winding lanes) they named Far End. In this village of Kingham and in the house, Far End, they have lived an extraordinarily attractive life. Except for the years spent in France during the war, and subsequent short trips to the same country, their life has been curiously unvaried. There is a broad table overlooking the flower-filled garden, beyond is the country, the woods, the sky. Here it is she works during the morning. Sometimes the excitement beyond the window proves too much for her. Birds are her hobby and she often has to stop to watch these neighbors.

> I sometimes wonder [she once wrote] when I watch a fly-catcher hovering with upstretched wings, if any Pavlowa can offer so exquisite a spectacle; [and again she speaks of] listening to the delicate melody of the willow-warbler, dropping among the leaves like a tiny chain of crystals.

And at the right hour are the silver teapot, the thin bread and butter, the bowl of chrysanthemums, and friends dropping in for tea. Besides the birds there are always the dogs that bounce about one's heels when one goes for a walk. Since the success of *The Little French Girl,* a car named after the heroine has a place in the family affections. Although there are some years to cover before one arrives at *The Little French Girl* and the car named Alix, there has been so much continuity in the de Sélincourts' life, and it has been so definitely established about the Cotswold home, one can describe what she was doing twenty years ago and it is, in all its large aspects, what she is doing today.

But in 1908 the house was new and the husband was new, and *A Fountain Sealed* just published. The conflict is between a gracious, sensitive, Europeanized mother and the cold, complacent, self-righteous, provincial daughter. I do not know of any more repellent picture of a certain type of American virtue than this daughter, Imogen. Cocksure, opinionated, unlovely in every way except to look upon, she, under the cloak of righteousness, is able to work incredible damage. The fountain-like beauty of the mother's character is powerless against this marble wall of her daughter's egotism. In the end, alone and in defeat, she is the "fountain sealed."

This able book was followed two years later by the witty, highly intelligent comedy of *Franklin Winslow Kane.* At the height of *The Little French Girl's* success, Hugh Walpole put himself emphatically on record as preferring this earlier book. To me it is the most memorable portrait I know of "the funny little man", whom all of us have met (often about universities) and often liked. He is perfectly honest with himself and the whole world. Utterly without charm, entirely disarming—in his own way he is a perfect gentleman, although his clothes always look a little wrong, and he is the "sort of young man whom one asked to tea rather than dinner". He is own cousin to Henry Sydnor Harrison's immortal Queed, but Queed is a sentimental impossibility compared to the incomparable little Franklin Winslow Kane. He has loved one woman for fifteen years. When he realizes that she is about to marry a gay Scottish charmer, he walks alone in the woods. There he meets Helen who secretly

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loves the light-minded laird. They look at each other and he says gently, "I have been crying too". He is the only hero I can think of who can make such a simple comment wring the heart.

*Franklin Winslow Kane* gives a tremendous idea of the writer's skill and strength, but it is strength held in leash. Such a book one reads with intense interest and then wonders what the author could do if she really "let go." *Tante* is the answer. Here, for perhaps the first time, she shows us her Pegasus at a gallop. The book made a great impression on both sides of the Atlantic. It is a most masterly showing up of an egocentric genius Mme Obraska, that insatiable vampire, escorted by her toadies, her dependents, her gawkish admirers, wrapped in her wonderful white raiment, twinkling with jewels, sweeps through the book with magnificent reality. Little Karen, her ward, is all but brushed from the story by the dazzling pianist, for it is Tante's book; no one else really matters. The whole thing is seen through the eyes of Gregory Jardine, one of those watchful, understanding males. Karen herself, with her poise, naïveté, loyalty and possible lack of humor, is spiritual sister to the earlier Felicia of the *Paths of Judgment* and the later little French Girl.

Just before the War *The Encounter* came out. It takes place in a small resort in Germany, and the characters are largely American and German. An actual incident in the life of Nietzsche forms the basis for this "tragi-comic love affair". In spirit it is close to *Franklin Winslow Kane,* brightly mocking, highly intelligent, very objective. Hers was the comic spirit as defined by Meredith. I say "was" purposely, for I doubt if she will go on in this direction. For better or worse her attitude in her later books is much more personal, she is absorbed in the characters, their sorrows are hers. And why this change? Remember the year of *The Encounter* is 1914 and her next novel was not published until 1922. Between those dates lies the War.

The de Sélincourts were early in France, where they worked in a hospital organized by friends. For a woman of so sensitive and, in the best sense of the word, so esthetic a mind, the weight of such an experience cannot be overestimated. She became a nurse. Working thus year after year, surrounded by sickness and anguish of mind and body, it would be strange if there had been no effect upon her writing. Such experience made some "hard-boiled", remote, callous. With others, love and sympathy grow when called upon. It is among these latter that we must place Mrs. de Sélincourt. By 1922 she was ready to love the characters in her books—even that most unlovely yet curiously touching woman—Adrienne Toner.

It would be an exaggeration to say that before the War her characters were presented merely as amusing laboratory studies. Surely the creator of "darling little Franklin Winslow Kane" had great affection for him as well as amusement from him. But when one sees how lovingly she has dealt with Adrienne Toner, and realizes how easily she might have made of her a second Imogen Upton or another Tante, one realizes that there is a change. Roger Oldmeadow is in this story the disillusioned, watchful male who alone sees through the terrible complacency and the portentous commonplaceness of the wealthy American heroine. As she dazzles his English friends with her platitudes of "joy and peace and strength, he sees her voice" as a bland blue ribbon rolled out among broken counters of color. "She said things to an end: when the ribbon began it unrolled; and it seemed always to make a silence in which it could be watched." Roger, from observing her, decides that "conceit can be of an order so monstrous that it loses all its pettiness". The tragedy of Adrienne is that she really is good—but all she manages to do is bad. In the end she faces the soul's most bitter moment—she sees through herself. She may repent her actions, but how can she possibly change her nature?

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*The Little French Girl* had so many thousands or perhaps millions of readers it would seem unnecessary to dwell long upon it. But I hope that the critic who wrote in 1908 that "Miss Sedgwick would never become a popular writer" was impressed by its prodigious success. It was undoubtedly the character of Alix, herself, that so charmed the general reader. For the first and last time Anne Douglas Sedgwick devoted her attention to an obviously attractive central character. Instead of the baleful Tante, the charmless little Mr. Kane, the inflated Adrienne Toner, or even the honest but slightly repellent dark Hester and aging Monica of the last novel, we have a perfect little paragon of all charm, all virtue. Alix is so pretty, so young, so beset by danger. She is so wise and yet so innocent. Given the writer's distinction and beautiful reality, it would seem impossible that a book about such an obviously enchanting young girl could fail. Nor did it. None of her books shows more grace in writing. The story is equally divided between France and England, and how beautiful both countries seem! There is always a golden glow over France, and England's beauty is seen through a mist like the tears of love. How recently had the author seen these two, her favorite lands, torn by war, endangered. She looks at them with new and opened eyes, as one looks at the face of a friend just escaped from death. It is some years since I read the story but certain landscapes stay painted upon my mind. That little watering place near Dieppe where Alix's beautiful pagan mother stayed, and the "charm" of yellow goldfinches flying against the unearthly blue of the sky! Those cliffs where Giles and Alix walked! It seems to me that the two countries are the real heroines—between them and their temperaments is the conflict. London, the dearly loved old grandmother—P a r i s, "a goddess with a wreath". It was while Anne Douglas Sedgwick was working with refugee children in France that she came in contact with a young girl who started her imagination along lines that ended with Alix. Not a direct prototype "yet it is improbable that I would have written just that book if I had not known a little French girl very well".

*The Old Countess* followed two years later. The heroine is a magnificent portrait in the Goya manner—malignantly festive, a senile coquette. She is intrinsically evil, but, like the old white cobra in one of Kipling's tales, so old her poison has dried. It is about her ward, Marthe, and a handsome likable young English couple, that the story turns. Here we have not the "old triangle" but a new quadrangle, for the old countess herself, and in her own way, is as much in love with the one man as are the other two women.

As *The Little French Girl* showed the all but unavoidable conflict between the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin temperament, so does the latest book, *Dark Hester,* show the perennial strife between the generations. That the protagonists are the mother and wife of the same man, and both superior women, makes the struggle the more poignant. Here is no striving to take "types" from the older and younger generations. Monica, the mother, is by no means the complete Victorian, nor is the pungent dark Hester the usual post-war girl. I believe that Monica's portrait is better drawn. At least, women Monica's age have repeatedly told me how true she is, while Hester's contemporaries seem slightly doubtful about Hester. It is a good book, although it lacks the great romantic charm of *The Little French Girl* and the bright cerebral playfulness of *Franklin Winslow Kane.*

What the next book will be is not known—at least I have no way to find out. But if Mrs. de Sélincourt herself is in doubt I wish she would at least consider the possibility of the Paris of her teens—and Bouguereau and the Impressionists. What fun she could have doing it, and what a delightful thing to read!

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# ON TURNING HISTORIAN

*by Francis Hackett*

I AM a conscientious man, though lazy. When my publisher suggested a life of Henry the Eighth to me, I had the idea that this was the sort of book that could be written without much effort. A few months' reading had the same blasting effect on my presumption that a few months' residence in America or India ought to have on the visitors who go there planning to polish off a book. The Bluff King Hal that I had seen on the stage, the King Hal of the waxworks, never existed. The man who had existed was a totally different kind of being, infinitely more interesting but by no means the theme of a few months.

One of the best books on America, its author told me, was three-quarters written before he set his eyes on Long Island. This was a wise man. Had I employed the same method before reading about Henry, I should have saved myself trouble. But a living land keeps its legend in sight, while a historical character has been dead so long that he cannot oblige you by imitating his legend. When he comes back to life for you, he does so with the rudest disregard of his official portrait, and no sense of your limited time. The months I intended to give to Henry drew out into years.

But why not have turned at once to the professional historians and dug out the real Henry before going on to new documents, unchronicled discoveries and "fresh material"? How often I have met people in the last three or four years who have said, "Finding lots of fresh material, are you?" or, "I didn't suppose that there was any new material". They think that they are well acquainted with the real Henry, and that the only excuse for writing about him is to have dug up a casket of letters, or to have explored acres of secret records of Vienna or the Vatican.

I ought to be flattered that anyone could look on me as a specialist. I admire the specialist. A moment comes in writing history, as it came in mapping the world, when surmise is forbidden, when the word takes shape, when the brave thing is not to fill up the blank spaces but to leave them wholly blank and to say, "I do not know". There is a hardness about real history which surpasses anything that the finest art can accomplish. When a professional historian like Professor Salvemini, for example, uses his best method in examining the story of Matteotti's murder, and Mussolini's relation to it, you forgive the jungle through which he forces you to fight your way, for the sake of the conviction which only this fidelity to the document and to the sources of evidence could possibly give. He does not conclude. He leaves a blank space. But in four hundred years, I guess, the scrupulous contribution that this hard-headed Florentine has made to contemporary history will stand the test rather better than anything Guicciardini or even Machiavelli has left us, even though our contemporary employs lit-



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erary zinc and ferro-concrete where they employed onyx and white marble.

But genuine research is an immensely arduous occupation.

I went to the Archives Nationales in Paris to engage in research myself; and to have held in my hand the actual dusty paper on which Wolsey's palm had pressed, to see the actual impetuous scrawl of Marguerite at the end of disciplined script, to know that these wraiths, these figments of our brain, had indeed been in the very flesh with us had an amazing effect on my imagination. Just as I was trying to read Wolsey, I heard a blurring sound, and I looked up to behold an aeroplane in the sky. Here I was down among the dead men, and there, flashing in the blue, was a youngster who might live to bomb babies from an aeroplane and so advance the cause of civilization. The apparent gap between the Cardinal who had straddled a mule and this Ariel in the heavens narrowed to so little, a mere four centuries molding an organism that has been ostensibly human for a million years, that I could hardly believe it was the Cardinal who was dead and the boy alive. Wolsey at the moment is less archaic than most cabinet ministers in Europe or America. Marguerite is our sister; one of the most exquisite and sensitive of those modern women who have seen the folly of absolute morals and who at the same time have ached for an absolute lover. But I, who felt I could really appreciate the bearing of Marguerite and Wolsey on the drama which each generation re-plays, was only able to gaze like a fool at the words they had either dictated or put on to paper.

My practice in reading proof during twelve or fourteen years as an editor and the average knack for reading bad hand-writing which this develops did not enable me to make any headway with these cipherous scraps of parchment in Sixteenth Century French. It would have taken me six months at the Ecole des Chartes to learn enough to extract the real meaning of the simplest of these letters; and to have gone on from that to Sixteenth Century Latin, in order to read other documents in the original script, would have cost me another year. To be baffled on the threshold of discovery, to have documents in my hand and not be equipped to use them, to know that Henry was offered Marguerite early in 1526, but not to be able to weigh each syllable and to see how far he was already planning divorce, made me realize what a price in blood and tears the professional historian must pay to give us the control of any episode or the bearing of any facts.

The expert who is engaged in history in the proud and holy sense of the word, withdrawn from the highway, closeted with the idea, brooding, digging, plumbing, excavating, wedded to a skeleton bride whose bony kiss and whose rattling embrace have an ecstasy in them beyond Cleopatra's, cannot be held lightly by popularizers or have his name taken in vain. To engage in the research of history, a man must say farewell to earthly communicativeness, and descend into the solitude of the incommunicable, lighting his hat-lamp and taking his diamond pick. He is really professional, and in everything historical he has the last word.

But the general public, of course, could not possibly read good professional history. It bears to living events something of the same relation that blue prints do to actual houses. Absolutely professional history, of the best scientific kind, is, and ought to be, practically unreadable. The layman ought to be stunned by it into terror, awe and submission, as I am when I see a recondite chemical or mathematical formula. The man who is solving the intricate and subtle realizations that the higher history demands cannot be bothered with popularization. The best poems cannot be written. The best buildings cannot be built. The best history cannot be communicated. These things in their ideal form exist merely to feed the mind's eye, and the labor of projecting them so slows the actual fecund

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joy of carrying on the perception of truth that for a professional to stop to make history intelligible would be as wanton as for a pathologist to get mixed up with irrigating a blood-poisoned hand every four hours. Any historian who has the gifts of a Maitland ought not to be asked to be a middleman.

But while I defer to these masters, a sharp distinction has to be made between the professor who is devising and accomplishing research and the professor who is simply utilizing it.

The average professor who writes in the *Cambridge Modern History,* not to speak of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* or the *Dictionary of National Biography,* is an inexpert, a popularizer, a vulgarizer, a middleman. He is not a specialist in the high and holy sense. But by one of those comic impulses which are so human, these middlemen of knowledge, these ordinary professors who run around their parish in a Ford sedan after a good lunch on a beefsteak and a bottle of stout, pull a long face if you look at their cloth and put on the airs appropriate to members of the Trappist Order. To see them under popular observation, you would imagine that they had been gleaning in the field or laboring in the vineyard since early morn. Research that calls for dusty years in the record offices, some command of earthly solace in the way of a stipend, and a living knowledge of English, French, Spanish, German, Flemish, Italian, Catalan, Gaelic, Breton, Portuguese and Latin, is just as innocently presupposed in favor of these professors of history as the military record of all doormen, the bank balance of all men with a Packard, and the virtue of all ladies with white hair.

This sort of thing imposed itself on me when I began to read about Henry. I was so staggered by the difficulties of research that I transferred its prestige to all the professorial historians. Under such circumstances, I said to myself bitterly, it behooves a scribbler like me to be humble before my superiors and deferential to the Authorities. These historians, I said, are able to pick up any document and see what it means in the twinkling of an eye, while you writhe and blush in actual physical discomfort, and expect the president of the *salle* to come and put you out. I thought of the men who had gone to these original documents in this very *salle* of the Archives Nationales. I thought of Froude, of Brewer, of the great Michelet himself, and I decided that I had better go back to my hotel and accept myself as a literary boulevardier.

But without a high degree of shamelessness, no man is fitted for living. Before accepting myself as trumpery, I made up my mind to review these historians' qualifications, and my own.

## II

Consider Froude. Froude boasted that he spent a vast number of years among the original documents at Simancas, and no popular English historian of recent times could hold a candle to him for diligence, linguistics or technical equipment.

And yet Froude was a hopeless ninny. He could decipher the Spanish and the Latin at Simancas; but required to give an opinion on the motives of Catherine or Anne Boleyn or Henry, he could not even disguise the fact that he was wielding the whitewash brush for Henry. He could write of Henry with such an incapacity for truth, such a preoccupation with Tennysonian heroics, such a fund of sanctimonious platitude, that his learning and research were like the best lime mingled with the worst sea-sand. He was beautifully equipped and he was wholly lamentable. He destroyed his own materials, as if he had handed the eggs for his omelette to a Ballymurphy cook. He was not dishonest; he was merely abysmal. He was like those country magistrates who adorn the Bench, committing epileptics to the lunatic asylum, flailing poachers, flicking gas companies, believing every word of the girl of fifteen who says she

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has been assaulted by six men. So much experience as his, one imagines, ought to result in insight; but Froude was born purblind and adhered to it with touching fidelity. His politest obituary is to be read in the words of a professional who terms his huge history, "one of the most brilliant and fascinating masterpieces of historical literature, a work which still holds the field in popular, *if not in scholarly,* estimation". In other words, no historian can say a word for him; but if he erred, he erred on the right side.

Brewer is incomparably more intelligent than Froude, but if you want to get the measure of the academic historian erecting his scaly epiderm and shooting fire from his red nostrils, you have to read Brewer's onslaught on J. R. Green. J. R. Green committed a crime; he wrote *A Short History of the English People* from the liberal point of view. It was sentimental, picturesque, grandly fluent and extraordinarily vivid and interesting. It sold something like 35,000 copies out of hand. Brewer was a good man, cooped up in one of those cubicles of the Civil Service in which Englishmen who are humbly born and have no influence are allowed to slave away forever, and, in his time, were lucky if they got two or three hundred pounds a year. Brewer took over the gigantic task of editing the letters and papers of Henry the Eighth. He was a man with that infinite capacity for taking pains which, united with timidity, makes the perfect Civil Servant, and even the fact that he was overburdened with routine work did not prevent his writing rich and nutritious prefaces to the Letters and Papers. But he was the man on foot who is passed by a man on wings. He denied to J. R. Green's book any right whatever to be regarded as history. He denounced it in terms supposed to be scathing, and he even deserted the territory of history proper to pursue Green as a pacifist and a mollycoddle.

You can only read this denunciation, reeking with hurt pride and balked ambition and thwarted zeal, and ask, Who was Brewer? Granted that he was a true professional and Green a mere paltry amateur, the fact remains that Green, the amateur, made of his liberalism no such smoke-screen as Froude made of his toryism. Green disengaged from the secondary sources a narrative that met one's demand for good sense on every page, and that showed an insight denied to Froude in dealing with original sources. Brewer tripped him up on a number of details; but when it came to seeing England in the large, Green was head and shoulders above the timid Civil Servant who criticized him, and who was so incapable of offending his masters by his real and bitter contempt for Henry that he hedged on it through two enormous volumes.

But if Froude is the scholar mediocre by nature and Brewer the scholar mediocre by circumstances, what of the scholar who is a man of genius, like Michelet? Is there any use for anyone else to attempt history?

On his own headland, a man like Michelet towers to heaven like a lighthouse. He not only has built up his history of the right materials but he has made it luminous and significant and graphic, a finger that points the way. In the company of Michelet, you are aware of the rhythm and march of Europe, the scheme of institution, the procession of personality, the astonishing caprice of circumstance. But when, in the midst of his vast representation, Michelet has to reach out beyond his proper field of research to sketch a character he has not had the time to investigate, then you see that he has to improvise. His Henry the Eighth is only less fictive than the Henry the Eighth of Shakespeare. Michelet saw Henry favorably, because he looked like a Protestant. Michelet was so infuriated with the Jesuits that he would have got into the dirtiest cab in Paris if he had been sure that the cabby was a Protestant. Shakespeare's Henry was simply the wadding with which the dramatist, whoever he was, stuffed a royal upholstery. Michelet's Henry was a Progressive, a fine young Paraguayan or Laplander who also believed in Liberalism.

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When the Jesuits have bitten you, and you are hitting back, you are ready to write glowing paragraphs about any man who proved such a porcupine to the papacy.

III

Scholarship, I conclude, is no guarantee against ineptitude. But does this do away with the duty of research?

Everything depends on what you mean by research.

I got into difficulties in London with a piece of illegible script. It was not a historic document; it was, as a matter of fact, the signature of an indecipherable gentleman who had a flat to rent to me. A "flat" is English for an "apartment", just as "apartment" is English for furnished rooms. I had for some time been living in a house belonging to the Duke of Bedford within a stone's throw of the British Museum, at the heart of English civilization. It was a house that had no bathroom, one water-closet for twenty people, no method of being heated except by open fireplaces that gave half-a-crown's worth of heat for half-a-sovereign's worth of coal. The house should really have been moved into the British Museum and put alongside the Elgin marbles, as a proof that the English are just as independent of low physical comfort as the Athenians, 500 B.C. It was more uncomfortable and more unclean and more wind-swept than a shack in the sandhills of Nebraska, and having proved to myself that I am no Athenian, I wished to change. But I could not read the name of the man from Peckham who had a flat near by, so I took the letter to the personage in the British Museum whose business it is to decipher gnarled manuscripts.

He was a singularly kind man. The signature baffled him. After one glance at it, he gave it up. He led me to a directory of Peckham, looked up the address, and fitted the signature to a resident. Just like any sensible newspaper man.

This mode of free research so impressed me that I did not soon forget it. I wrote to the name in Peckham and promptly got an answer. The man arrived. He was a Welshman. I asked him why, with a name so common as his, he should render it unreadable. He wagged his head and said, "I don't want everyone to know my name". This interested me. It recalled to me a statement of Henry the Eighth's. And as the man was a compatriot of Henry's, more or less, I began to look on him as an object of collateral research.

After five minutes' acquaintance he said, "Look here, I've taken such a fancy to you that you can have the little flat for three pounds a week". He had, unfortunately, named a price of two-pound-fifteen in his letter. But I let him take me up to his flat. "It is very tiny," I said. "Cosy, cosy," he answered. "It has no sun or air," I said. "Aye, it's very homelike," he replied. He looked around the horrid little bedroom. "My wife loved this room," he murmured, "she was in it for the last two years. Yes, she died in that bed there of cancer." And all this for three pounds a week.

It was more like Henry's father, I decided, than like Henry himself. But I regarded it as research.

IV

Trivial, say the professors. Trivial, I agree. And human. I had decided to act on the probability that Henry the Eighth had once been a human being. To suppress this fact as unimportant, to immerse myself in the details of treaties that had died in the perambulator, to see Henry with the religious awe of my landlady in Torrington Square, which was so like Froude's, to behave as if I had been permitted to enter the presence of royalty but must not speak unless spoken to, seemed to me as little like science as the behavior of a friend who refused to look into a microscope because it seemed to her to be peering into the secrets of God.

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Good history is the result of a happy marriage between a knowledge of the facts and a knowledge of human nature. This is the ineluctable truth.

Had the professional historians been doing their duty by human nature, it would be utterly impossible for me or for any other man of letters to attempt historical biography.

But the immense rush, the Mississippi flood, of historical biography is not merely the outcome of informal public curiosity due to a lack of formal education. It is far more the proof that amateurs who are in touch with life have become frantically impatient with historians who are only in touch with death. It is the proof that history, starved and neglected, has simply been waiting for a foggy night to climb out the window and escape from her husband. She has been listening to the young man with the lute down below, the literary troubadour. She cannot bring all her baggage with her, the poor girl. She has come down the ladder with nothing in her hand but a lip-stick and nothing on her person but a chemise. Her proprietor, the gentleman with the beard, who has run with red eyelids to the window, and who is now waving his arms frantically and calling, "Clio! My unfaithful wife, harlot, darling, Clio!" has suddenly awakened to the fact that in some unaccountable way he has ceased to be attractive. He invokes the marriage law. He proclaims that he and Clio had been duly united at the Institute of Historical Research and that he had led her down the front aisle of the American Historical Association. But what is the use? Clio is already sitting on a beach in Maine, her head in the lap of the literary man, smoking a cigarette and saying, "But are you sure you really love me?"

This escape of Clio from the bonds of holy matrimony has my entire sympathy. It was time she left the professor. The professor, in point of fact, was not so faithful to her as he might have been. If he had one eye on Clio, his goddess of history, he had his other eye on Climbo, the goddess of success, and what cooled him toward Clio was his terrible fear lest Climbo, the beaming patroness who has such influence with the trustees, might disapprove of anything he said or did.

This is not a dignified tone in which to write of the professors. Certainly not. And as a middle-aged man, who acknowledges that this is a hidebound world, my prudent advice to all troubadours who want to please Clio is, "Regularize the union". The official husband was at every disadvantage in regard to his partner: he was tedious as a housemate, inattentive as a companion, gloomy as a provider and impossible as a lover. He looked on his marriage to history as a forced marriage. He paraded with her in his braided coat and took her to academic receptions, but he never asked her what she really wanted, he never saw that if he was to get on with her he must risk her devouring him and must at any rate lose his soul to save it. To expect her to preserve jam for him, and count the laundry, while he was really engrossed in wondering whether he would be made an M. V. O. or invited to edit an encyclopædia, showed that so far as history is concerned he was simply the matrimonial dead-head, the man who punches the time clock, the human dragtail, the professional routineer.

But if scholarship, or The Academic as it is called, is loaded with these general practitioners who cover over their lack of inspiration and lack of conviction with a tremendous manner that is well calculated to daunt the spirit and cow the intelligence of youths of eighteen, the interloper whom I describe cannot hope to hold Clio unless he sees that under the guise of a flapper she is a goddess of the antique mold. If he has taken her away from darning the professor's socks under the impression that his own golf stockings won't need to be darned at some future date, he is making the usual mistake of the flippant. If this is a "flirt", as the continental women say, then there is no outlook for the genius of history but to slink back to the stale life that gave her a status.

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This irregular union of history with vivacity cannot remain tolerable unless we who care for life are ready to work for our living.

The sad story of Ikaros is something that the historical amateur cannot get around. It is all very well to rise on wings, but they must be made of silk, not wax, and they must be reinforced with duralumin. Otherwise you are destined to make a little mound on the flying field.

The disease of pedantry, in other words, cannot be cured by the device of salesmanship. If the schoolmen are pretentious, the profiteers are poisonous, and the public has just as much to fear from literary goods in the bright, new, flashy container as from the dull hocus-pocus of the Ph. D.

It is no new game to attack the pedants. The fight against them has been raging since the opening of the Sixteenth Century. Colet strove against them. Budé reproached them. Erasmus mocked and denuded them. More laughed at them. Rabelais lambasted them. All the men of the enlightenment reviled the schoolmen, and consoled and helped one another in the assault on the clay-bound. But to do this under the impression that the pedants merely take work too seriously, or are dull because impersonal, or lack salt because they are not sufficiently rollicking and careless, or are damnable because they are not sufficiently spontaneous and ready to slap culture on the back and offer it a cigar, has never been the mistake of creative critics. Erasmus was far too keen, too incapable of vulgarity, to confuse the abusers of learning with the learning they abused. No man worked more sincerely himself or used apparatus more eagerly than a pathfinder like Erasmus. Thomas More was less fine and, as Erasmus observed, he had rustic hands. More's passionate vituperation of Luther has gone into the obscurity it merited, while the *Praise of Folly* endures, because both its subject and its way of treating it are eternal.

History in a bright container is obnoxious because of its false vivacity. The ear of the public is long, and to catch it and pour into it a pleasing tale is profitable. It was Shaw's fierce integrity in regard to the public that made him first revolt against the exquisite art with which Shakespeare came into town like a circus man with ringlets and soon was sitting in an arbor with the public, his elbow on the table, his words caroling from him like the song of the bulbul, and the good housewife listening with her cheeks aflame and her heart so heated and steaming with his ravishing extravagance that she can hardly wait until they wander into the wood. But if Shakespeare's methods are contrary to the ethics of the Fabian Society, what of the methods of the Bright Container? What of the gimcrack seducers, the tinpot women who write of Nelson, the Private Lifers, the compounders of history who only use glucose and Chinese egg? What of those vendors of literary herring who do not smoke their herring but dye it a golden brown?

What is the public receiving, after all, in this New History which is so much better than what the professors were giving it? To concoct a plausible legend where the professors renounced false picturesqueness, to read a few standard works already suspect and simply titivate the old story, to use real figures as dummies in a new campaign of ideas or a new exercise of the romantic imagination —this is hardly the way to offset the opacity of the academic, its lack of vitality and its lack of heart.

The Bright Containers, as critics are beginning to point out, disguise any number of cheap expedients. So if one wants to discriminate against the pedantic method, one must at the same time make it clear that to forswear scholarship is not enough.

## V

The New History, in the best sense of the word, is not to be identified with the Bright Container. It is a serious departure from the old.

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And the object of the New History, as I see it, is not to "get the goods" on anybody. It is not to "show up the bunk". That was the fallacy of the muckrakers, who supposed that once the People knew the shame of the cities, the shame of the cities must cease. The New History, disencumbered of the pieties which make the religion of power so fetid, has the task of relating the whole performance, the Show as seen from the front and the crouching figures as seen from behind, to a serious consideration of the realities, the poignancies, the urgencies, the blind or flashing forces, of human disposition. What are men like? What was Henry's human nature like? That is the impious and the serious question the New History tries to answer. That, you may answer, is what the best professorial historians have always done. The best professorial historians have had other fish to fry. You cannot examine them without discovering why a New History was badly needed.

Let me illustrate from Professor A. F. Pollard, M. A., Litt. D., F. B. A. Mr. Pollard is professor of English history at University College, London; examiner in modern history in the Universities of Oxford and London; author of a dozen books, of scores of articles in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and the Dictionary of *National Biography*. No man living, I suppose, knows more about the Tudor period than he does. He is a historian, an authority in the best professorial sense. And he is a good conventional historian. He is large and solid in plan, unsparing in his effort to dig out the facts first-hand, extremely able in handling awkward masses of evidence, honest in his intention, sober, thorough. If I make my point with reference to Mr. Pollard, it is because he is a representative man.

"For my facts," says Mr. Pollard in the preface to his *Henry VIII*, "I have relied entirely on contemporary records, and my deductions from these facts are my own. I have depended as little as possible even on contemporary historians, and scarcely at all on later writers." That is to say, he is the very reverse of the amateur or the smatterer, the journalist or the romancer. He has gone to the sources, and he has paid the price. If you want *history*, professional history, as opposed to personal history or New History, the man you want is Professor Pollard.

He has not, of course, mastered the contemporary records, since, as he frankly points out, this is impossible: there are at least a million facts available about Henry the Eighth and his reign. If a man consumed the available summaries of these facts at the rate of one a minute, it would take him six or seven working years to swallow the bare summaries alone, leaving digestion and indigestion out of the question. No man, therefore, knows all the facts, has ever known all the facts, or could know all the facts. And even so scrupulous a professional as Mr. Pollard is not inerrable in his citation of the facts. He is wrong here and there, now and then, like any other mortal. Elizabeth Blount was not, for example, the sister of Erasmus's friend, Lord Mountjoy. The picture of Wolsey at Arras does not bear the words *"auteur de devorce"*, but *"auteur du schisme"*, a very different thing. It is absurd to say that Henry was "offered the crown" of Denmark when the Jolly Rogers who offered it to him had no more right to do so than I have to offer Ireland to Al Smith. But these are trifles. I do not stress them. They merely illustrate that there is no such thing as a history without errata.

## VI

But insight is my topic.

What does the studio-historian do when it comes to official portraiture? This is the first of my queries. Take that description of Henry the Eighth which is undeniably part of the contemporary records. It is the Venetian description which begins—

> In this Eighth Henry God has combined such corporeal and intellectual beauty as not merely to surprise but astound all men.

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It is what is called a glowing description, or "rapturous". Mr. Pollard quotes it without reservation, though of an earlier orgy of compliment he says, "this is overdrawn for modern taste". Is "overdrawn" the word? I know a Venetian who thinks nothing in the world so ugly as the English rock-garden, but when he goes to tea at a garden party he says, "O ze rock garden! How beautiful! I love ze rock garden!" This, hollow and cynical as it really is, falls with sweet softness on suburban ears. Is there any good reason to suppose that this ever-quoted description of Henry by the Venetian is any less hollow and cynical? We have, after all, many existing pictures of Henry which do not surprise and astound us by corporeal beauty. But better than that, we have portraits by Venetian diplomats of other people, which betray the diplomatic methods of such painters in oil:

> He sits upon a snow-white horse, with serene forehead, with commanding dignity. As he distributes his blessing to the crowd, all eyes are fixed upon him and all hearts rejoice. How admirable is the mild composure of his mien! how noble his countenance! his glance how free! His stature and carriage, his beauty and the full health of his body, and they enhance the reverence which he inspires!

And again,

> The heroic beauty of his whole body was given him by nature in order that he might adorn the seat of the apostles with his divine form in place of God.

Who was this other corporeal beauty? The admittedly heavy, puffy, gross and elderly scoundrel, Pope Alexander VI. The Venetians saw him clearly as he was, but they described him in poesy. And these rapturous tributes that they paid in diplomatic privacy they took pains to have promptly overheard. In "relying entirely on the contemporary record" in this fashion, Mr. Pollard has shown himself somewhat guileless, and hardly equipped for this wicked world.

But there is that thing known in photography as the retouching process. Let me give an instance of how it is employed in the best historical studios. Mr. Pollard has an account of Jane Seymour before him, rather a cruel account. This is how he handles it: He is quoting a letter from Chapuys.

> She is [writes Chapuys] of middle stature, and no great beauty; so fair that one would call her rather pale than otherwise.

He cuts off the quotation and adds in his own words:

> But all agreed in praising her intelligence.

The way in which they "praised her intelligence" may be judged by reading the rest of this very same letter of Chapuys.

> She is a little over twenty five. You may imagine whether, being an Englishwoman, and having been so long at court, she would not hold it a sin to be still a maid. At which this king will perhaps be rather pleased . . . . for he may marry her on condition that she is a virgin, and when he wants a divorce he will find plenty of witnesses to the contrary. *The said Semel is not very intelligent, and is said to be rather haughty.* (Taken from Friedmann.)

The great reproach of the studio-historians is that we amateurs do not rely on the contemporary records, and that we use our "imaginations". If this is *relying* on the records, give me Herodotus, give me the scientific Dumas and the judicial methods of Harrison Ainsworth.

But these oddities in Mr. Pollard are perhaps less important than the rigidity of his point of view. He dances with his arms and legs, so to speak, but his respectable torso never moves.

Henry's love letters come into his hands. He holds them at arm's length. "There is nothing very extraordinary in the letters themselves" is his decree. He regards Anne Boleyn. "Her place in English history," he declares, "is due solely to the circumstance that she appealed to the less refined part of Henry's nature."

There, in two sentences, you have the central psychological problem of Henry's reign

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interviewed in the outer office and dismissed with an embarrassed cough. It is, of course, rather a handful, the Anne Boleyn story, but to cast out the love letters is to apply the stethoscope to the overcoat. "I hear nothing," says the doctor. "A little bronchitis, perhaps, but nothing very extraordinary." And the man with 103 degrees of temperature is sent staggering into the street.

Is not this concern for the decencies?

But what of the decencies that are involved in Professor Pollard's underlying *Realpolitik?* He wrote, I think, in 1905, when the beans that had been prepared for the Boer War feast had just been used for the funeral. His pride as an English nationalist was possibly hurt and his mind confused. He admitted that Henry the Eighth was corrupt. "He is Machiavelli's Prince in action," than which you can say no more. But Henry had "defied the Pope to do his worst". He had come triumphant out of deadly perils. "He had carried England through the greatest revolution in her history". Are not all politics corrupt? And was not Henry a man who said, like King John, "This England never did, nor never shall, lie at the proud foot of a conqueror. . . . Come the three corners of the world in arms, and we shall shock them". Proud and glorious words to quote to undergraduates, say I, though not good history. But if you drop overboard the really magnificent reasoning on Machiavelli which the best of English political thinking has achieved, such as J. R. Green's, you must then go through with your hard-boiled realism.

"Politics are simply non-moral," says Mr. Pollard. This is a serious thing to say. It is a serious thing to pitch one's principle of politics so low that it takes in without question all the treacheries, assassinations, cruelties, lies, and double-dealings of the Tudor period, and it is a serious thing to tell the virgin young that Caliban is to be admitted on the ground-floor, provided he wears a cambric shirt. But if the young men are right in believing Mr. Pollard, and I am not certain that they would not be right, it then seems to me worse than absurd, actually reprehensible, to reserve all moralizing for the Church of Rome. When Mr. Pollard, who has lauded Cranmer to the skies and who canonizes Cromwell as a "hero of the Reformation", comes to judge Pope Clement, he echoes the strongest feelings of the Protestant moralists. He gives Henry latitude on the ground that politics are non-moral, but it goes against his nature to give a Frenchman, or a Spaniard, or a Papist the same latitude on the same ground. He has never, that is to say, made over his heart entirely to Clio. He is still fighting for the Reformation, still defeating the Armada, still lighting the candle that never will be blown out.

In short, he is human. And the pose of scientific germ-proof historians is never to admit that they are human. They tell you that they "rely entirely on the contemporary records", and pasteurize their historical imagination. By this means they distract you from that mass of feelings and convictions and purposes and wilfulness which makes a historian a man. They never contemplate their own bias. "They slip over their presuppositions."

## VII

Having labored hard, on a hot day, to offer a bill of particulars, even if Mr. Pollard is the head of the Institute of Historical Research, I turn to the side of the human house from which I come myself.

I believe I understand the feelings of studio-historians when they write of creatures who seize a camera and dash as tourists into history. I understand why a great many tired-looking men and women frown like irate members of the Plasterers' Union if you approach the treasury of history without a union ticket. The men who are giving their lives to a specialty, and who are manipulating and shaping the tools of that specialty, feel highly disposed to take your life if you en-

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croach on them, if you have not salaamed four times, removed your shoes, kissed the big toe of the goddess on the second joint, and had your ear punched with a brass tag, before commencing your volume with a list of academic acknowledgments.

The grim coldness with which professionals who follow the beaten track regard the interloper is not less true of historians than of plumbers, princes, priests and prostitutes. The newcomer is detestable. Let a female appear in a pulpit, or a bonesetter in a village, and the irruption sends waves of professional animosity down the spine of every regular practitioner. Why, this sort of tribal loyalty extends to the children and the servants of all rightly constituted unionists. When I was a child, and first saw another doctor who took five shillings instead of the ritualistic guinea on which my father insisted, I used to get goose flesh and look shudderingly for the brand of Cain.

But *francs-tireurs* like myself are in reality agents of evolution. We are annoying and objectionable, but we widen the art of professional history and keep the specialists from degenerating.

The doctrine of the "original sources", the "contemporary records", for example, is nothing like so valid as it sounds.

When the Litt. D. tries to lay some lucid writer by the heels because he cannot produce contemporary records, how much weight is the public to give to this criticism? Are the professors right in believing that for everything you need to know about a king and his wife there exists somewhere, carefully preserved by the proud Record Office, an accurate document in writing? It is obviously ridiculous. Two things happen to crucial political documents: one is that most of them never get written; the other is that most of the compromising documents are destroyed. When Dublin Castle was handed over to the Irish Free State, the last act of the retiring officials was to make a glorious bonfire of original documents. Had one Civil Servant of the best type been present, this outrage on human curiosity might not have occurred. But it did occur, and it is eminently typical.

What, then, is the lover of life to do? He must clearly search for indirect evidence if the direct does not exist. He must use his wits, his invention, his imagination.

No historical writer is any good as a popular writer unless he has romantic imagination. If he gives it free rein, he passes into the class of historical novelists, who ferment their story. To keep within the bounds of non-intoxicants is the obvious task of the historian. He must have his imagination, but he must snaffle it and ride in check. To put it literally, he must restrain his imagination at that point where, to gain coherence, he would be obliged to fabricate evidence. The desire for a coherent story must be inborn in him, and he must want that coherence to be on the highest plane of interest; but if at any time he lets his imagination run away with him, as excited children do, his yarn has neither the immense value of conscious creation nor the immense value of fortified historical narrative. It becomes a fantasy at best and at worst a lie. You cannot play with it, as you can with a story. You cannot take it as real romance, which is the breath of imaginative life—the coherence of a man who uses the suggestion of history to embody his own yes and no.

The coherence of scrupulous historical narrative must not be supplied by a selection from the facts according to one's own temperament but from a consideration of all the available facts, whether one likes them or not or finds them handy or not. The unhandy facts, in other words, the awkward bits that are not easily reconciled with your version, must never be huddled away or conveniently discounted. History is a judicial business, and if one bad little fact whom you have excluded because you did not like him puts up his hand at the Day of Judgment and says, "I'm here. You kicked me out of your history, boss, but here I am, I belong, too", your respon-

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sibility for that blackface becomes horribly apparent. If one of these outcasts tries to pester Dumas *père,* the entire literary police will turn out to protect Dumas. But gallopers like Carlyle and Macaulay, who have trampled down material witnesses, must expect these victims to raise their bloody hands and bandaged heads.

No good writer can avoid the "pretension to read thought". Take such a moment in Catherine of Aragon's life as when she had to say whether or not she had lived with Arthur as his wife. It was a tremendous moment. It was, in the real sense, a point in history on which everything was to turn. But who can substantiate what was in Catherine's soul at that moment? There is no document to tell us how, when and where she herself made up her mind, though we know that she did make up her mind, and that she submitted herself to be examined by physicians. Most historians, in the absence of a written document, simply ignore this point in history until there is a court trial that refers to it nearly thirty years later. I think this is a pity. Bergson's *Creative Evolution* seems to me to have demonstrated the vanity of trying to get at the truth of real people and real events by piecing the story together simply from scraps of written testimony and evidence straitjacketed and stiff-kneed in rationality. The thing cannot be done. The policeman comes in the door, and truth flies out the window. It is dangerous, of course, to conjecture: but it is fatal not to conjecture. A story that has no suggestion of life, no drama, no coherence, and bears no resemblance to what actually did happen, may be material for history. It is not, however, history. It is not bioscopic.

My own practice in such a quandary has been to suggest what I think probably happened. This is the sort of thing that is done in courts of law every day. It is not wholly satisfactory. Oscar Slater, who barely escaped being hanged and had twenty years in prison and has only just been released and vindicated and "compensated", knows how terrible it is to have been the victim of conjectures. But in historical writing it is the best provisional way of lighting up darkness.

This darkness, at the distance of four centuries, is almost total. Anne Boleyn had fits of uncontrollable laughter, for instance. It occurs to one that on these occasions she might have been a little drunk. It is fairly certain, and not without its bearings on history, that Henry was stewing in liquor during the last twenty years of his life. We were told he drank enormously, and one look at the paunch on his armor in the Tower of London is enough to bring him, shaking like a jelly, before our eyes. But his consorts were also well supplied with liquor. The maids of honor were each allowed a gallon of beer for breakfast. The allowance for dinner was no less liberal.

It is not impossible that Anne Boleyn began to drink hard when she was losing her grip on Henry, and that, like most of the courtiers, she was frequently under the influence of drink. We know from later history what uproarious carousals marked the court life of Charles the First, how the story dribbles and gurgles and gags and giggles with wine. But there are no memoirs to give us these clues to Henry's court life. The best work on *Daily Life in Norway and Sweden at the End of the Sixteenth Century,* Troels Lund's masterpiece, has not been translated from Danish into English; and it has been beneath the notice of the professional historians to give due weight to items of this simple physiological character. Yet we cannot be fair to any character without considering such relevant facts.

Such facts, however, bend their guilty heads when the professor walks among them. And for a very good reason.

## VIII

The reason is not shame, as I used to think. It is not decorum. But history is usually written on the plane of power; and since the state

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is an organ of power, and politics the play by which power is gained and utilized, the historians, who are by way of being official, subordinate every item that merely throws a light on human disposition. The State, the Nation, Public Law, Public Welfare, the Church, Free Thought—these are the heroes of official history, and these are the monopolists of attention. Anything else is trivial. Anything else seems rather irrelevant, rather unpleasant and rather disgusting.

Having only one life on this planet, however, I have long since come to Montaigne's conclusion, that the drama of power, grandiose as it is, cannot compare for interest with the drama of human disposition.

If the will takes complete mastery of a man, as it does with the active man of affairs, the captain of industry, the politician, the fortune-builder, the careerist, he hardly knows what any talk of "values" is about. The heart has become something rather shameful to him, an organ hardly to be mentioned, an imbecility in itself. He is preoccupied with results. He is interested in power. He wants power. He is initiated and an insider and at the true centre of things, so far as the realities of the moment are concerned, and he is circumscribed by the values of tangible order, the weight and mobility of actual opinion, the verdict of *Who's Who*. Talk to him of abstractions and his eye wanders, his mind shifts to to-morrow's programme, he nods, smiles dentally, politely yawns, and then starts up, "Heavens, is it so late? I say, hadn't we better turn in?"

History, for such a man, is the history of success in the world as it is. It is the history of power. The meaning of life is not in values but in action.

To possess this mastery of life, men are ready to do anything. Yet it is not the will, it is not the brain, which says the last word. It is the heart. The brain is merely the doorman of the heart, as the will is its agent. And if this doorman admits a single interloper, a single visitor who has not been franked by the intelligence, or if the agent has run away with his commissions, the meaning of the drama, the "purpose", is to that extent vitiated and destroyed.

Let us blindfold the doorman, and give the agent a free hand. Let us invent a wooden doorman. Anything you like. But I could not enjoy writing history without what Unamuno calls "the tragic sense of life"; without, that is to say, certain presuppositions.

The tragic sense of life is not, of course, an indispensable part of human equipment. No prudent man who puts on his legal galoshes and his moral earmuffs need, under ordinary circumstances, be nipped by it. But each generation as it comes along has to risk the darker gleams of self-realization; and those who avoid the risk avoid the initiation, which is the great drawback of prudence.

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# THE HISTORY OF THEIR BOOKS

## VIII. STEWART EDWARD WHITE

*by Arthur Bartlett Maurice*

MANY years ago, when Rudyard Kipling was a young man, he inscribed a book, written by him and illustrated by the artist Zogbaum, to "Fighting Bob" Evans with lines that began:

> Zog does things with a pencil,
> And I do things with a pen,
> But you sit up in a conning tower
> Bossing eight hundred men.

The sentiment of the following and concluding quatrain was that the sea dog, the man of action, lived more lives "than Zog or I could invent".

The situation might have applied to the scribe of tradition, confined by penury to his Grub Street attic, using his imagination and the study of musty tomes for descriptions of the lands beyond the horizon that he was destined never to see. It hardly applies today. Mr. Kipling's own existence has been one involving sufficiently high adventure in various parts of the Seven Seas. The subject of the present paper, Stewart Edward White, has not been exactly a literary recluse. To illustrate the point by specific reference to certain of his books:

The book that made his name known almost overnight, *The Blazed Trail,* was written in a lumber camp in northern Michigan. White was out in the woods all day, and the scalers and timekeeper with whom he shared a cabin objected strenuously to his sitting up nights; so he had to get up at four o'clock in the morning and plod away at his task until the cook yelled, "Grub pile!" *The Cabin* he wrote on the spot described in the book, a place in the high Sierras. *Skookum Chuck* and *Secret Harbor* were written on board his yacht in British Columbian and Alaskan waters. He would climb down into the cabin to plug away at them during the morning hours, and then go fishing or cruising in the afternoon.

His *Lions in the Path* was mostly written in a grass hut in Central Africa, about sixty miles below the equator, and he started on it because he had been so badly chewed up by a leopard that writing seemed to be about the best thing he could do for the moment. His right arm was in a sling and closely bound up, but he found that he could hold a pencil between the fourth and little fingers of that hand and got quite a "kick" out of doing the work in what might be called its native environment. Even when his writing has been done at home it has almost invariably succeeded either a long bout of research, or a long bout of living the actual life of the scenes depicted.

Thus, most of Stewart Edward White's books have been the result of research into ways of living in all parts of the earth. The work has been just as hard when approaching a subject whose setting has been perfectly familiar to him for years. Take the California books, *Gold* and *The Gray Dawn,* for example, also *The Forty-Niners* and *Daniel Boone.*



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He read and took notes, he thinks, from about everything published. If he ever missed any source of possible information he has not heard of it since. "Fortunately," he writes, "the pioneer libraries at Stanford, the University of California, and at Sacramento are exceeding rich in original documents for this sort of thing."

He finds it hard to tell about the genesis of his books. Generally, the impulse to write is born of something that seems worth recording and preserving and this something usually has grown out of his association with certain people or, perhaps, from living under certain conditions. Then he forms in his own mind those composite characters who most likely would be living under such conditions, and about them as characters, as far as plot goes, the story builds itself.

He simply turns them loose in their environment, and they do their own plot. Things happen inevitably, as they do in real life. He hardly ever has to do any revision except to watch for awkward phrases. The recasting of the plot is with him a very unusual experience. For that reason only once or twice in all his working career has he ever been caught in an actual *impasse*. In such cases he found that by turning the problem over to "the good old subconscious", the solution worked itself out, without too much labor on his part, in a satisfactory way.

The finding of titles has been either ridiculously easy or extremely difficult. In other words, they present themselves at once and for all time in the most pat and appropriate manner, or they never really come; for when there has been doubt Mr. White is never quite satisfied that a good title has been found, even at the last. It took him a long time to name *The Glory Hole,* and also *Secret Harbor*. On the other hand *The Blazed Trail* and *The Silent Places* named themselves before a line of the stories had been written.

Like many other authors, Stewart Edward White finds one of the greatest vexations of the literary career in those persons who persist in seeing themselves portrayed in his novels. As he himself expresses it: "It is a very curious thing, when one draws his characters as types, based upon experience with human nature and a sort of composite of individual cases, how many people step forward and maintain stoutly that the subject was drawn directly from them. I have had that happen again and again and no amount of argument will persuade Harry Brown of Keokuk, Iowa, or some such station, that I have not vilified his sainted Aunt Martha, when, as a matter of fact, I have heard of neither of them. It is astounding how many letters I have received, and how many accusations have been fired at my head. The funny part of it is, I never have drawn a character from life unless he was taken from the pages of history, and therefore a public character".

Three years ago, in the course of a cruise around the world, the writer of these little papers made the acquaintance of a California "native son". He was a man of great prominence, achievement, distinction, cultivation and personal charm; not at all the kind of a person likely to attach too much importance to a slight resemblance. He stated neither boastfully nor resentfully that he was the man from whom Stewart Edward White had drawn the portrait of the villain of *The Rules of the Game*. For three years the statement has carried conviction. But here is Mr. White's side of the case: "It so happens that I had never heard of —— ——— ——— when I wrote *The Rules of the Game*".

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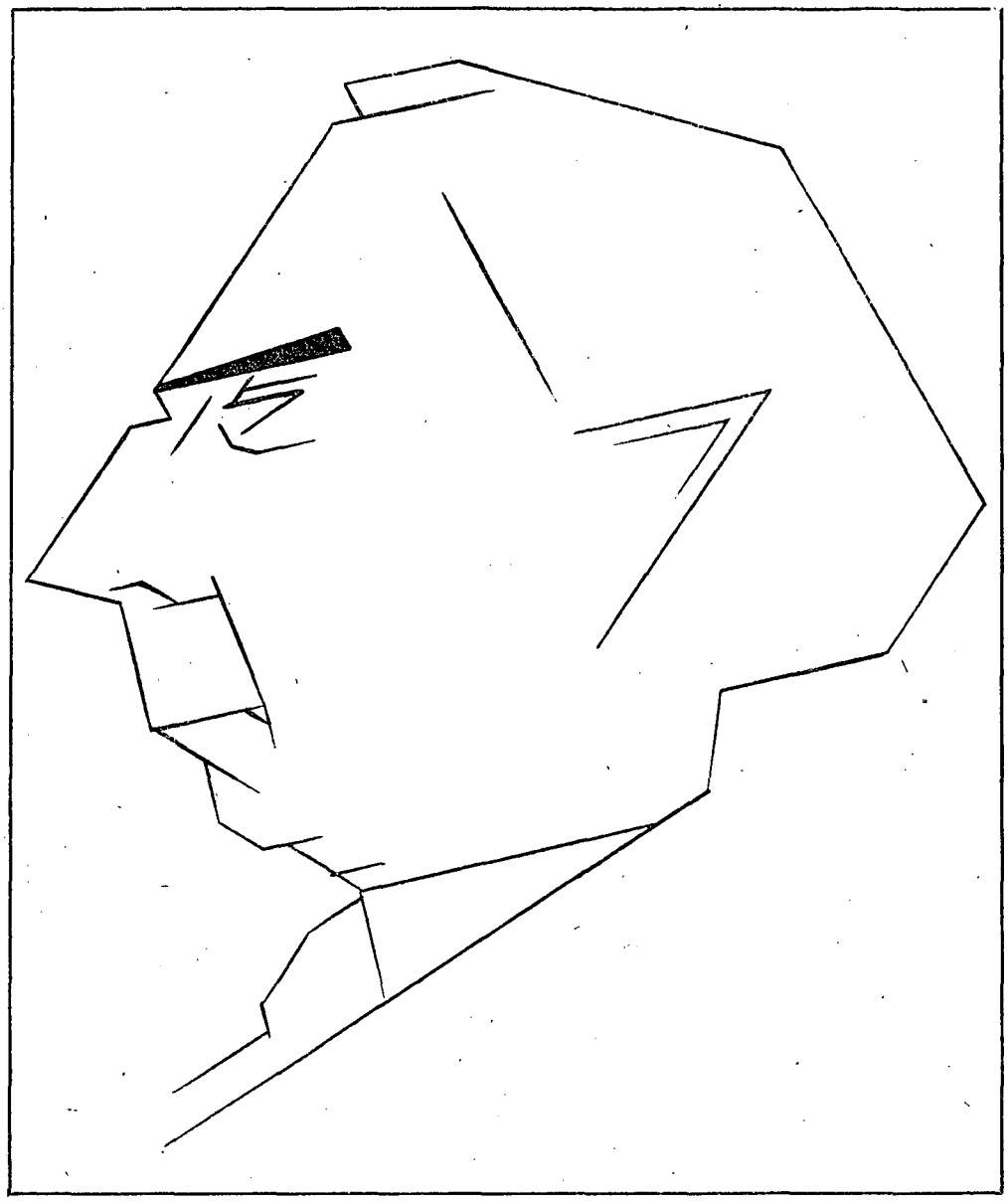

BERTRAND RUSSELL

*Caricature by Eva Herrmann*

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# MAKING CULTURE HUM

*by Douglas Bush*

About fifteen years ago, as everyone remembers, the more literate sections of the American public began to experience a variety of shocks. "Young men and men who stay young," to borrow the language of clothing advertisements, manifested an unpleasant joy in turning and rending their country. The civilization glorified in the success magazines and accepted with complacent piety in more respectable quarters, was pronounced barbarous and raw and intolerable, so intolerable, indeed, that creative work seemed possible only in Paris. That not wholly Socratic gadfly in the side of the republic, Mr. Mencken, allowed it to be known that he doubted the value of the most precious American ideals. Mr. Masters hinted that the sweet Auburns of the land were not all that they should be. Then came Mr. Lewis, and the revolt against parochialism and standardization, was in full swing. Everyone joined in the hue and cry against Main Street and George F. Babbitt; never was it easier to be on the side of the angels. Mr. Babbitt was a highly satisfactory victim, for the multitude of the intelligentsia enjoyed the fruits of his labors and at the same time made handsome profits by denouncing him. In the words of Peacock's war-song,

> His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
> And his overthrow our chorus.

Of Mr. Babbitt's overthrow there was little doubt, for every mocker was, by virtue of his mockery, a friend of sweetness and light. Some places, such as "Middletown" of recent exploration, may have remained Babbitt warrens, but the long compaign of satire and invective has resulted in a general awakening, a feeling that in the sight of cultured Europe man cannot live by bathtubs alone. "America," said Mr. Sherwood Anderson a while ago, "is on a culture jag." The phrase recalls the famous prediction of some American worthy, that when his countrymen took up culture they would make it hum. One hopes that the seer is aware that his prophecy has been fulfilled in both letter and spirit, for no one can escape the murmur of innumerable bees.

The metaphors of both oracles are significant. The one, delivered when business men were gods not yet dethroned by the satirist, breathes the confidence and energy of an era of expansion, the determination to acquire, as soon as time permitted, whatever decorative fixtures belong to a first-class plant, and also, by applying vigorous American methods, to make culture something bigger and better than before. The later phrase comes from a less confident, a little less naïve, but a no less eager age, and from a writer. Wealth has arrived, and leisure, or the possibility of it; everyone reads, nearly everyone writes; no one knows where we are going, but we are on our way. Our search for truth and beauty is both a crusade and an orgy.

Evidence of both lies all around, and one may glance first at the keystone of the Ameri-



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can home, the Sunday newspaper. If a reader were not already in the state of "lazy collapse" which Professor Irving Babbitt has associated with our most popular Sabbath institution, he might grow faint in surveying club programmes for the week—for both the crusade and the orgy are predominantly feminine, and "Evoe! Evoe!", or words to that effect, break from thousands of decorous Mænads in thousands of suburban homes. The Apollo Club is spending a winter with the Great Musicians, and the next meeting will offer, in addition to tea, papers on Bach, Brahms, McDowell and Gershwin. The Gunaikes Travel Club, which is circumnavigating the globe, is studying Asia this year, and China this month, so that there will be three talks on Confucius, Ming vases and the late civil war, with an opportunity to meet Mrs. *X*, who took the Pacific tour in 1925. The Alfalfa History Circle is doing Wives of the Presidents, from Mrs. Washington to Mrs. Hoover, at the rate of four a month. The Adelphi Reading Club is combatting the spirit of the age with a series of papers on Idealism in Modern American Literature; the subjects for this week are Mr. Tarkington and Mr. Bruce Barton, and in the near future there will be a lecture by Mr. Guest himself. The scholarly Drama Study Group, having had a doubtful, if earnest winter with Ben Jonson, is this year to take a little journey (one wonders how far) with Beaumont and Fletcher. . . .

And so it goes on, week after week, month after month, in Maine and California, Florida and Dakota. It is staggering to think of the millions reading and writing and talking and listening. One is reminded, if the parallel be not profane, of a startling sentence which remains from youthful biology—that in a given period the whole surface of the earth passes through the bodies of worms. Such universal activity is awe-inspiring and a rebuke to indolent detractors. And yet, sincere and laudable as much of this vast effort is, it reveals the same symptoms of imperfect health which can be discerned in the whole body of the cultural movement. Those symptoms, oddly enough, are very familiar, for we have encountered them all in the thousand and one diagnoses of the sturdy but vicious constitution of our old friend, George F. Babbitt.

When the nation of villagers had its general awakening and heard the general outcry against its cultural nakedness, the consideration of new clothes was forced upon it. Possibly books and ideas were not so dangerous as they had seemed. At any rate a little observation and reflection showed that culture was becoming decidedly fashionable, one of the marks of the well-dressed man, and it behooved Americans to lead the procession, whatever it was. But the American renaissance was no miraculous re-birth. Mr. Babbitt did not change his spots. He simply looked upon culture, saw that he needed it in his business and, with his accustomed vigor, went out and took hold of it. Whereas culture had been in the feeble hands of a few John the Baptists, whose amateurish and unorganized ideas had no driving force behind them, offered nothing but vague ideals of the civilized life, Mr. Babbitt made it tangible and attractive; he created, after his manner, both the demand and the supply. Ideas, literature, art, might in themselves be no more important for the busy citizen than the cut flowers in his limousine, but they could be and soon were related to facts and ways of thought which he fully understood and valued. When it is discovered, for instance, that not even a convention of automobile dealers can do more to "sell" a city than a symphony orchestra, there dawns a new vision of cultural possibilities.

The phenomena of the last few years have made it clear that culture has become bigger and naturally better. People used to think that culture was in large part the product of solitude and rigorous individual discipline. But we have changed all that; we insist upon conducting our education in public and by

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wholesale methods—a big turnover and the minimum of profit. Literature has come out of the study and set up its stand in the market place. Books and bookishness have become valuable commodities, a cut or two above soap or rubber heels, certainly, but still commodities capable of being exploited. The soap or the rubber heels or the books may be good articles, but the chief necessity is organization, advertising, selling power. In adopting, more or less unobtrusively, the methods which have been successful in business culture has, perhaps, stooped to conquer, but it has undeniably conquered. It has, of course, somewhat changed its nature in the process.

To assemble a mass of evidence would be tedious, but a few obvious illustrations may be mentioned. On the lowest levels we find eloquent variations on the worthy text, "Knowledge is Power", which, being interpreted, means that if you surprise your employer by speaking French you will get a better job. Since expensive advertisements must be paid for, there must be thousands of people who are deeply and effectually moved by pictures of the young man who is rising to high positions and the young man who is doomed to remain a routine clerk—and all because the one possesses the Harvard Classics or the Elbert Hubbard *Scrapbook*, and gives in conversation the impression of rich attainments. There is a whole cycle of heroic or blighted lives set forth in similar fashion —the young man who ruined his career by an unauthorized mode of approach to olives at his chief's table, a sin that would have been impossible if he had given his days and nights to the study of Emily Post; the young man who reads aloud to his wife and infant child from the Busy Man's Encyclopædia (placed in your home for one dollar), while his unambitious fellow employees squander golden hours in less edifying pursuits. Always the inducement is the same—the appearance of breeding or mental cultivation is a cosmetic that will charm "executives" and bring promotion. To one whose acquaintance with business men at leisure is limited to that afforded by trains and hotels, there is a mystery in this, for in such places at least conversation does not seem to concentrate upon the hundred best books, nor is it adorned with choice quotations from Mr. Hubbard's immortals. However, the books are sold. Incidentally, the ease with which great executives can be deceived may cause a layman to wonder a little about their giant intellects.

The higher planes of our far-flung civilization reveal a similar commercialized self-consciousness and similar spurious results, though the manifestations are less crude. It may be the commercial acumen of Mr. Babbitt that has made culture pay, but it is the *élan vital* of Mrs. Babbitt that started the movement, and that continues to give it whatever disinterested enthusiasm it may lay claim to. The "monstrous regiment of women" of our time and country operates in the sphere of culture, and Mrs. Babbitt should rank equally with her better known husband as the creator of American civilization. The hand that holds the novel rules the world. The universal and unceasing activity of women's clubs has already been mentioned. Witness also the infinite popularity of the lecturer in the United States. Listening to a lecture combines the minimum of intellectual effort, as small as that permitted or demanded by the movies, with the maximum of self-satisfaction which accompanies the doing of the right thing, and that the movies do not always engender. Hence the golden harvest reaped by foreign authors, and by hundreds of domestic peddlers of culture as well. So eager is the great feminine public (with here and there a dozing husband) to enjoy the palm without the pang, that any bardling who gets a volume into print is sure of an audience and adulation. At least a third of those present will take careful notes on at least a third of the discourse, which will be lost before they reach home, but for a space their souls have been in tune with Art and the Infinite and New York. If the same peo-

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ple tried to read a book at home they would have to make an effort or admit defeat, and the effort might be as distressing as Mrs. Dombey's failure. I am not speaking of the less zealous seekers after truth, whose quest of Higher Things is confined to disentangling a half-hour address on Science and Religion from conflicting dinner orchestras.

The desire, not for intellectual mastery but for a little cultural varnish, has revealed itself abundantly in the welcome given to Outlines of everything, and the various other educational short-cuts. The most notable agencies of progress are the several distributing clubs, to which hundreds of thousands of people hand over their minds for guidance. These enterprises have an interesting commercial aspect, which is not stressed, for their great aim is service. In fact they go so far to make smooth the path of their extensive clientele that one wonders why they do not go farther. Why should subscribers have to bend their intellects to reading a whole book every month when the bureau might supply a synopsis, with appropriate conversational patter? Although the avowed objects of these organizations, to which a number of our best minds have lent themselves, are so lofty, their success has been a most remarkable testimony to the intellectual apathy of the nation. It has also testified to the powerful, if hidden hand of Mr. George F. Babbitt, for no realtor could have shown a keener eye for business, or a more naïve joy in mere size, than these same distributors of culture. How it must rejoice the liberal enemies of standardization—not to mention thrice happy publishers—when, through the efforts of committees of eminent liberals, a hundred thousand people read the same book at the same time! Especially, if one tries to remember the names of some of the great books chosen a year ago.

There is a new cultural self-consciousness even in the last strongholds of barbarism, the universities. Young ambition has undergone a metamorphosis in the last decade. Time was when boys and girls went to college to enjoy a pleasant interlude before the eternity of the paternal pickle-factory or matrimony, and of course the majority still do, but there is now a considerable minority to whom dividends and the altar are less alluring than the typewriter. Every third undergraduate wants, nay, intends, to write. Out of a miscellaneous group of ten freshmen whom I happened to interview at an eastern university, one had written a novel, one was writing a novel, one had had a play privately produced, and two cultivated short stories. One attractive youth remarked that both he and his best friend were going to be novelists, but the friend didn't want to read and therefore had gone to Yale; the speaker, unlike most of his kind, did want to read, and had come elsewhere. Not that one would cast a slur upon Yale; we have it on the authority, I think, of Mr. Heywood Broun that a Yale football team stood with bared heads on Flaubert's birthday. All over the country ingenuous and ardent youth, not yet beyond the difficulties of spelling and grammar, is bent on expressing itself, and, having rich resources within, desires no more equipment than courses in writing, with a dash of sociology and what is called psychology.

But while a portion of undergraduate youth has been touched by the prevailing literary self-consciousness, the mass of students continue to pursue the normal curriculum of loafing and dancing which leads to the B.A. However, the present generation wears its vine leaves with a difference, as a recent writer has pointed out. The diversions which make up college life are partly the care-free frisking of the traditional lamb, but they are increasingly the nursery and training-school for future Babbitts. It is through them that the ambitious and sagacious young man learns how to "mix", how to "make contacts" which will be useful later; learns, in short, what he was sent to college to learn. He is not interested any more than his father usually is in education and ideas, but he knows even more surely than his father that

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college is the place to gain social prestige and influential friends—as his sister knows that it is worth while to spend a year at a college for women in order to be eligible for the alumnæ club of her home town. Everyone knows that the road to financial and social success does not lead through the college library. While business has attracted many men of genius, of genius vastly more important than swarms of minor literati who look down upon them, it has also, with entire impartiality, gilded the straitened forehead of the fool. Incomes of the illiterate in this country drive home the painful fact that education is a positive obstacle to financial success; that is why our university alumni are almost invariably wealthy or well-to-do.

In some ways the universities have resisted the invasion of Mr. Babbitt's standards and modes of thought; in others they have emulated him in widely extending the field of business and service. Our colleges, whose shortcomings enable so many idealists to turn an honest penny, are unjustly blamed for many evils they cannot prevent—they cannot in a day or a year re-make a civilization—but they must take a good share of the responsibility for propagating the ideal of cafeteria culture. The famous president of Harvard who popularized that ideal would perhaps not have gone so far as his followers in loading the counter with every possible kind of pastry for every possible kind of palate. The humanistic ideal of a liberal education has been well-nigh lost amid the hundreds of courses on salesmanship, hotel management, and what not. Every day the newspapers report that some university has inaugurated another fantastic course. For the universities measure their success by the number of people they contrive to attract, no matter what the inducement, no matter how far they desert their proper function. They have gone a-whoring after false gods, and, to change the figure, the chickens come home to roost, in the person of illiterate and powerful alumni. The conflict goes on, but on almost all fronts victory has been won by the ubiquitous Mr. Babbitt. Numbers are power. It is better that one good mind should perish than that ninety and nine morons should be neglected.

These few illustrations are significant and serious enough. A while ago we glorified business and business men, and there was little to disturb the happy reign of Philistinism. Now we have glorified culture, and, thanks to the ingrained habit of the American mind, we have, in the mass, been able to approach it only through the familiar entrance, the clicking turnstile. Whatever we do, whether it be making money or cultivating our minds, we seem incapable of disinterestedness, of individualism. If business men, we feel strong and happy when united with others. In the sphere of culture also, united we stand, divided we fall. We are nervous and uncomfortable if we are not reading what others are reading, if we have dropped a month or two behind the current output. We are so self-consciously pursuing culture that we cannot read for pleasure, but only to keep up. To fall out of the procession in order to cultivate a genuine private enthusiasm would be almost unthinkable. So long as we are all shouting together it does not greatly matter what we happen to be shouting for.

We are incurable victims of professionalism in all our activities, and that fine flower of civilization, the amateur spirit, is almost non-existent in America. Even when, as at present, culture is the mode, our earnest aspirations toward the Higher Life are more or less vitiated by a sort of genteel prostitution. The culture we best understand is of the kind that can be and has been "sold" to the nation. Mr. Babbitt is stronger than we thought. In the effort to defeat him culture has taken the always dangerous course of borrowing the enemy's weapons. Surveying the great cultural scene in America, one vast night-school or Chautauqua, Mr. Babbitt might well exclaim, "I came back, I saw, I conquered". The villainy he taught us we have executed, and we have indeed bettered the instruction.

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# ROCK RODONDO

A MEMORY OF PARIS, 19--

*by David Cort*

THOSE Galapagos Islands in the centre of the equatorial Pacific, surveyed imaginatively in former times by Melville and more recently and less imaginatively by William Beebe, both reports agreeing, however, that the face of the land thereabouts has been wrought into the most inhospitable expressionlessness that ever land turned toward heaven, those Galapagos Islands nevertheless are said to offer the supreme courtesy of a natural tower from which gluttons for the uncivil may see a great part of that desolation all at once. This natural tower is called the Rock Rodondo.

This gigantic and precipitate spire of stone may be seen at a distance of some thirty miles and at that distance was often mistaken in the days of canvas-driven ships for a sail. By certain sorts of birds, however, it is known at one hundred times that distance for what it is. Melville says:

"To the north, to the east, to the west, stretches nothing but eternal ocean; so that the man-of-war hawk coming from the coasts of North America, Polynesia, or Peru, makes his first land at Rodondo. And yet though Rodondo be terra-firma, no landbird ever lighted on it."

Nor is this a difficult paradox. The birds who find the Rock a congenial point of arrival and departure are the solitary, outlawed bravos; and the law-abiding sparrow who chanced to fall so far out of the ways of comfort as this upthrusting outpost would be torn down in the air by a hundred cruel bills. For this is no Salvation Army station, no St. Bernard Convent for the strayed and weary. There are no letters of credit here, no freemasonry. Immunity is accorded those who have no need of it. Pirates, misanthropes, scavengers and free-lance desperadoes, they have scorned or found unpalatable the protected populations and have winged their way with fixed sneers, over endless wastes, toward this paradise of unsociability. They arrive alone, they are content to remain alone in a crowd of solitudes, and in their good time they leave without adieux, for a purely hypothetical destination, alone.

* * *

There came to Paris in the closing years of the Nineteenth Century a Madame Gelmotte who founded in due course a salon which was for some years able to bring together under one roof unquestionably and far and away the most strange and brilliant and redoubtable—if the words convey anything—convocation of mortals, mostly male, ever assembled. That salon cannot be made into one story; indeed, it can be made into too many, but its internal life was too powerful and too various to submit to organization with respect to one plot, one climax. All that can be done here is to indicate its factual outlines.

Madame Gelmotte was not unworthy of her eminence, for she was, except for a merely physical animateness, the human equiva-



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lent of a monument, a landing-place, a Titanic, unlive quantity. The elements had passed over her, removed what irrelevant cargo they might, and reduced her to her basic and most mighty constituent: gray rock. In the newspaper-file past, she had been the wife of a provincial French politician who was also some sort of contractor. This man had become involved in a political scandal in connection with the town ash-dump for which he had a franchise. The public was never very clear about the details of the matter; but the general odor of it was sordid enough; the man was jailed, released on bail, and committed suicide by hanging. Scarcely two years later, the daughter of the house distinguished herself in a particularly gory and unimaginative *crime passionel* and was soon afterward assisted to a penitentiary, where she doubtless still is, if she has survived. A nephew on the husband's side assassinated a presidential candidate in a Central American principality. And finally, Madame Gelmotte's only son, apparently an unattractive gentleman, was shot dead as an informer by some disreputable colleagues.

Madame Gelmotte was left with a name that had been at home in newspaper headlines for ten years, a life that had been ruined wholly and piecemeal, and the considerable remnant of a fortune. With her gray, wispy, bobbed locks falling piteously around her ears, the face lined like a man's, the always unseeing anxious eyes, the succession of little distracted nervous habits, no one of which ever caught on permanently, she was the archetype, the spokesman before the Throne, for all those stricken regiments of women, the relatives of the defendant, who are to be found on the first benches of the courtroom. Madame Gelmotte had arrived at impregnability; Destiny had gone a little too far and had ended by leaving its victim stronger than itself. She had been dead one hundred thousand years; incomputable pressures of earth had rested on her, and she had been turned to stone, to a substance not even serviceable for fuel, a substance whose only remaining function was to remain. She was a little below average height, a comparatively small woman, and she was accustomed to wander among her guests in a kind of daze. She listened attentively whenever she was addressed, but she did not know the name of a single guest; and afterward, when her salon had dispersed, it is to be doubted whether she knew she had ever had a salon.

The "advantages" of Madame Gelmotte's salon were as follows: four enormous rooms and two baths (many of the guests came only for the bath); a bar manned by four shifts of bartenders; an elaborate free lunch, with hot and cold dishes; admission at any time of the day or night; a staff of maids who cleaned out the place regularly three times every twenty-four hours (as though it had been a railway-station) and whose corollary duty was to be agreeable to the guests. The apartment was well-heated; was supplied with a great number of couches; and was so arranged that approximately twenty groups might entertain themselves independently of one another. Any one might walk in unmolested, but as will be shown, there was a sort of ethic among the guests as to who should remain. The eductions were nearly always imperceptible, for the initiates maintained as their common and almost only virtue a meticulous courtesy toward Madame Gelmotte.

The birds. Melville says: "Birds light here which never touched mast or tree; hermit-birds, which ever fly alone, cloud-birds, familiar with unpierced zones of air". By some method of advertisement so inexplicable as to seem now to have been supernatural, those who were eligible to be Madame Gelmotte's guests were apprised of her existence and gathered from the four quarters of the earth. They came as if by chance, at any hour, as though they had happened to notice from the street the lighted window and thought it that of an hotel. They gave no appearance of recognition; even as they established them-

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selves, they seemed on the point of leaving; their hard blank eyes seemed to see nothing. But the fact was that they too, like the man-of-war hawk, the albatross or the gony that has winged its way over its demesne of a million acres of ocean, had traversed throughout their lives equally endless wastes, with set sneers, disdaining the commitments of communal men, toward the ultimate loneliness of this abutment. From "unpierced zones of air", from terrible vigils of misanthropy, from metaphysical worlds indivisible into a heaven above and earth and water, from lands beyond the rim of all known and imaginable things, in their good time they came, hovered for a moment and with a beating of wings settled upon this Rock Rodondo. Here they made their first land.

The guests of Madame Gelmotte were of many kinds, they had many faces, but they had in common that they were lone raiders on, or lone refugees from, a society designed, as they conceived, for the accommodation of the feeble and the foolish. "A little way apart and on a height" they remained, not from the excessive timidity of hermits or the excessive vanity of snobs, but from the insupportable horror of true understanding. Their crimes against society, for which they alone could deal themselves the just penalty, were the crimes of curiosity, sight and wisdom. "The world was their oyster", but it was of no more use to them than to the gull who can find no land above water on which to shatter it. Their bleak eyes steadily regarding one another remembered the finality of that recognition. They had outlived despair but their last state was far from resignation and no less far from charity. This minute surviving remnant of those born with their eyes open had mastered the supreme secret of living without hope or the possibility of hope. For themselves, they supported the appalling life of their minds in an unpuncturable vacuum.

Let it be said that Madame Gelmotte's guests, each for himself, had traced a pattern beneath the main formlessness of life as an abstraction; that is, he recognized a sort of God: or he had discovered an utter absence of pattern; that is, he denied God; but in either case he had found it a Godhead or a Godlessness without pity. Nor did they ask it, nor did they give it. It is possibly to be regretted that, having learnt all things, pity they had not learnt. They were not kind to such of the innocent, the weak, the blind as came among them. It was hypothetically possible that the intruder might apprehend and master the code and method of his hosts in time enough to defend himself against them. But in practice the event did not occur. He was invariably destroyed. By any one of a number of unapparent Inquisitions, he was given half of knowledge, half of strength, half of sight. Thereafter, wherever he went, his eyes showed the reflection of madness and he was of no use. The history of Madame Gelmotte's salon is punctuated with the tragedies of her guests' victims, but this account is not the place for those irrelevant episodes.

It must not be thought, however, that the methods of Madame Gelmotte's guests were the equivalent of those of the birds-of-prey. They did not resort to physical maiming or murder, or any easy violence. For these gentlemen had all their lives gone to considerable pains to go the most difficult way. They had eschewed with equal scrupulousness the conformities of both common criminals and common burghers. Their instruments were invisible, their essential language inaudible, the difficult delights of their world were comparable to those called forth by that strange drug peyotl which, doing no harm to body or mind, seems to reorganize the world in beautiful baroque colors and shapes of absolute objectivity, a phantom world with a validity more real than reality, yet whose fair and hazardous shores will rise but for those who can command the genie. They had come by their mastery at the end of an exhausting regimen of self-torture, of abnegations and difficult acceptances, of the most painstaking discriminations. There was nothing they had over-

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looked in the quest for the secret of what they conceived to be "virtue". They had, in effect, flayed themselves alive, stood against the hurricane, submitted to trial by fire, by water, by burial, by resurrection. They had offered themselves to all beauties, all corruptions, all things knowledgeable and hard come by, they had sought passionately for one strength stronger than theirs and they had not found it. It begins, then, to be seen of what kind was their impregnability. It was not that of Madame Gelmotte, of the rock, but of naked men in constant sword-play. From whichever side one came, one confronted the minute point of steel, but a point that was everywhere, and everywhere three feet deep. One saw first that pale metallic wink of steel; later one saw at the centre of the circumference the cold eyes eternally open, the clue to the bright cold mathematics of the mind within; but one only sensed the supporting column of vulnerable flesh, self-doomed to its endless labor, sweating and indefatigable.

The Dark Ages in the beginning of Madame Gelmotte's salon remain unrecorded, but it seems certain that at that time the rooms were infested by a company of innocent and trivial Bohemians, the usual "literary groups" of the Paris of that time. These accepted the automatic bounty of Madame Gelmotte unmolested until the arrival of the scavengers preliminary to the coming of the true company. These were a Rumanian who called himself Siegfried Plantagenet and whose honest name was never discovered, followed at an interval of several days by an Italian Jew named Carcarco. The man Plantagenet had a trick of talking at an indefinite stretch perfectly meaningless gibberish. He was able to invent, as he went along, an extraordinarily plausible arrangement of sounds, made up of syllables, half-words, improbable hyphenations of words, interspersed with truncated quotations from the Latin, Greek and an Albanian dialect. By imposing on this an extemporaneous design of intonations, of periods and pauses and repetitions, he achieved a nonsense that gave the frightening effect of being on the point of yielding, at the next moment, a terrible subterranean sense. It was not long after he had brought this technic to bear that the gathering of Bohemians dispersed, never to re-appear. Carcarco was merely the only man ever discovered who could hear Plantagenet out. His face was the archetype of the peddler's face, it was capable of making any necessary motions and responses endlessly, without fatigue and without the assistance of the eyes, which maintained the expressionlessness of cold consommé. These two would march up and down, through the rooms of Madame Gelmotte, knocking down all who came in their way, the one talking endless gibberish, the other endlessly listening.

It was soon afterward that six of the true company arrived separately within the span of a week. Meantime Plantagenet had relapsed for a moment into sense and had agreed with Carcarco that they should defend the place against all comers and share its matchless advantages between them. Immediately the newcomers arrived, Plantagenet resumed the phonographic rehearsal of his gibberish, went marching as before through the rooms, buttonholing the latest arrivals and declaiming sound at them. But these were delighted, they could not congratulate Plantagenet enough on the perfection of his technic. They went on to an exhaustive analysis and dismembering of that technic and the materials employed in its exercise. They identified his Latin, Greek and Albanian dialect quotations, his half-formed allusions, his half-words and double-words, and from these admirable semi-conscious clues they began to reconstruct his entire past career, with such ingenuity and accuracy and dispassionate joy that after a Titanic harangue enduring without intermission for thirty-two hours, Plantagenet walked down the front steps for the last time, dragging Carcarco by the hand.

The six remained. They were increased in

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the course of time to a total of more than a hundred, though the number at any one time "in residence" shifted from day to day and sometimes, as when some event either known only to them or world-notorious occurred or was about to occur, their number was likely to dwindle, within an hour, to as few as ten, who never moved. It would not be possible to identify and still less to make legible sense of them all. All that can be undertaken here is to sketch in the most spectacular and superficial aspects of a half-dozen or so and perhaps not the most important or spectacular half-dozen. The difficulty is not the same as in describing the Knights of the Round Table or "Scarface Al" Capone's gorillas, since no one of Madame Gelmotte's guests can be thought of in relation to any other: they do not, all together, make a total. Each of them had a separate entity, unreferrable to the entities of the others, and since each was his own absolute, it is necessary in speaking of them to speak, however falteringly, in absolutes. They may be thought of as comprising a universe of equal suns whirling about the pivot of the dead sun, Madame Gelmotte, their mutual attractions and repulsions making a perfect equation of tensions, dynamic powers in a deadlock so absolute as to seem static. Every one of them alone against the world was formidable, but in the salon the balance of power among them all remained constant, each of them invulnerable against the assaults of the others, each impotent to pierce by his strategy the armor of any of the others. Like distant stars that reveal themselves to earth-bound men as suspended fixtures in the sky, they may have seemed at first sight almost harmless.

The Glasgow man, John Stuart, who arrived among the first six, was an absolute. He was quite old, probably over sixty, a frigid-eyed and very merry man, whose gaiety was comparable to a frozen fountain, transparent and sparkling and giving the appearance of constant movement, but actually congealed by a final despair. He had several kinds of genius but perhaps his greatest was his genius for contempt. Having observed with some diligence of what stuff the spirits of men were made, he gave them a clear cheerful frosty hate. He was almost delighted to see that men respected effective dishonor; that men and women were unhappy until they had minimized and soiled their friends, even and especially those they loved; that men assumed to themselves a pride and importance, as undangerous as it was disreputable, from the tragedies of those close to them, from death or spectacular ruin, but far more exquisitely from suicide or insanity. But Stuart liked to keep himself amused and also he was a very moral man. Thus he undertook before he was twenty-five to bring to a completion before his death an extraordinary punishment for society. In carrying this into effect he was to be seen for several decades in the habitats of ordinary men. He was a scientist and he was actuated by an ambition beyond compare that drove him to a fierce anxiety, a limitless patience and an indomitable intellectual arrogance. It took him ten years to discover the formula of perpetual motion. He laid it aside. He turned to medicine, in which he had already begun his training, and in the course of discovering an infallible cure for cancer, came also upon cures for leprosy, hemophilia, encephalitis lethargica, diabetes and spinal diseases. He laid these aside. He anticipated by forty years the discovery of relativity and the fourth dimension and hypothecated the fifth dimension. He laid these aside.

But his great work was to organize in scientific terms the laws of psychology and human behavior. These also, together with some ten other discoveries and inventions that would have interested mankind no less, he laid aside. He turned now to the formulation of an antitoxin for so much progress and good works, an evil to balance so much virtue. He invented a poisonous gas, before poisonous gases had become so attractive to the war departments of the world, that was competent

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to destroy, not armies or cities or even nations, but continents; as well as an explosive which, after the first terrible blast, broke into ten thousand undiminished fragments as potent as the mother-bomb, these fragments having a pretty way of running for a great distance along the ground and exploding again into ten thousand other fragments and so on up to the number of seven. With the gas, of course, all life could be destroyed on an entire continent; but with the explosive the remaining inanimate structures on the face of the land of an entire nation could be leveled to one smouldering ash-dump. If pure idea, words and figures on the page, may be said to have a power of their own (and the theory has often been expressed), the three hundred pages of Mr. John Stuart's formulas had power enough to crumple the universe like an opera hat. Mr. Stuart took his manuscript to a printer and, under his own very attentive supervision, had one copy of it printed and then had it bound in a standard binding with the title, *A Complete Inquiry Into Some Lesser-Known Examples of "Crank" Science.* This one copy he delivered as a filing copy to the British Museum. It was filed in the ordinary routine in the archives of Crank Literature. There it remained and there, doubtless, it still is. Very well. John Stuart had had his little joke. Nothing remained for him but to laugh, and so he went about for the rest of the years of his life, which numbered seven, laughing. But while he was with Madame Gelmotte, he did not fall out of touch with such progress as science was making of its own accord. He was often made hilarious by the newspaper-headlined reports of the inch or two of knowledge that some industrious scientist had pulled by main force after forty years' labor out of the void of the unknown.

There were at that time several uncommonly talented young men in the various sciences and from time to time Stuart would decide to put a stop to their not quite feeble enough efforts. Thus he would occasionally invite one of them to have tea with him at Madame Gelmotte's. The young man would recognize Stuart as a master—would be impressed by his "friends" and Stuart was kind enough to go over the young man's work. His trouble was that he was wasting his time on a triviality. The Chinese had all but discovered as much in 500 A.D. but were not interested in pursuing it. That old swindler, Bacon, had skirted around it three times. In the end, the young man, if he was not interesting enough to be set upon in good earnest by the whole company, was sent away to spend the rest of his life, as it were, copying over and over again, like a disciplined child, "What do I know? Nothing". For he had had taken away from him both the humility of man who knows nothing and the arrogance of man who, in the dark, still is not dismayed by the shadows. In effect, he was no longer a scientist. These little mutilations, so necessary to produce eunuch-scientists, were Stuart's hobby and greatly diverted the company, who were often pleased to compliment him on his admirable sense of humor. Loved and honored by all who knew him, he continued to decorate the years with his gaiety until, one day, he went off to die, not being assured of the disposal his colleagues would make of his body and being, as all scientists are said to be, genuinely religious.

Not the most important member—and yet one who repays investigation—of this first delegation of the true company was the son of a German waiter, one Berger. While the others rejoiced in exhibiting the machinery of their minds, Berger's talent was for revealing nothing. He was indecipherable and he had a manner which marked him as unequivocally something that, on the basis of birth or position, he unequivocally was not: it was not exactly as a "great gentleman" or an "aristocrat", it was rather as a member of that class that has always existed, today under the name of "society", in other times of "courtier", "the ladies and gentlemen of the court", those whose distinction is not that they are

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great, but that they are at ease among the great.

It is impossible to exaggerate the perfection of Berger's manners, they were flawlessly insincere, that is, they were designed to give the impression of the highest generosity, good will, virtue and amiability, with the maximum economy of emotion, thought or money. He was continually doing the kind thing, saying the kind thing, walking not more than three steps out of his way to post a letter. His secret was that he had discovered that it is equally exhausting to be honestly rude or honestly polite to anyone. Hence, he chose to be dishonestly polite, to act out a ritual of courtesy with a mechanical uneffusive warmth, without the slightest recognition of the individual. He knew, furthermore, that it was more flattering to be polite in what was accepted locally as the "best manner" and he could become at will "society" *à la* New York, London, Paris, Chicago, Back Bay in Boston, Montmartre, Five Towns, Bloomsbury, Kansas City, or anything you will. His urbanities were superficially at any one time as complimentary as possible, but the implication beneath them was blandly insulting: that the best in sincerity that others could do was worth no more in response than a formula.

It was nothing to Berger that he did not deceive you, it was nothing to him that he had repeated to you for the tenth time the same formula, the same flattery, the same joke, the same excuse. The strength of his method depended upon its appearance of an unremitting effort to convince, but its strength was in no wise impaired by its failure to convince. The only reason he exposed himself to people was to exercise his manner, since he gave them nothing, they gave him nothing. He was a snob and had an astounding instinct for where was the most exclusive society. He was thus on hand almost before it became exclusive; by the time it became exclusive he did not have to mention that he was one of the First Residents; and his early arrival in Madame Gelmotte's salon was a symbol and would have pleased Madame intensely if she had ever noticed him. As time went on, the others attempted to reach his heart in a thousand ways. But they were spending their efforts on a genius. Berger's instinct was infallible for the proper line of conduct to take in response to the most unconventional sallies.

Up to a point he received everything with the air of one who had heard all that before but was not unwilling to be amused. But when these liberties passed some indeterminable line, Berger began the delicate application of a crushing snub. His snubs were, however, a definite compliment, since they presupposed an equal delicacy of perception in the recipient. For these he employed an idiom of graduated symbols covering something under fifty degrees of snub, of which Herr Berger's most severe was to begin to clean his fingernails. Several gentlemen thought at various times that they had pierced his mask, that they had evoked a genuine emotion of anger. But no! it was soon all too apparent that he meant, no less than before, not a word he said. The high fury rolled on, but it was to be observed that his eye was abstracted, it was attending the scrupulous details of the ritual. He produced a rage, as well as a compliment, as though he were shooting his cuff. He was the climax of the history of manners and he was a satire on all manners. It would have taken ten men merely to tabulate in their lifetimes the intricacies of his code, as logical as the Roman Code and as comprehensive as Solon's Tables. He was a very cultivated and erudite man and, in spite of his poverty, he dressed immaculately. So much was to be seen. But what he felt or whether he ever took the trouble to feel, no one knew. He seemed to open himself in ten thousand ways, he was willing to discuss anything with greater or less authority, if anyone wished it. That gracious courtesy, that enchanting kindness, beckoned always like a fair mirage, a bland deception, the wanton arms of arctic mer-

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maids offering the embrace that chills. But when he left at the end of two years no one remembered ever having seen his cheek flush, his eye kindle. Herr Berger left, as he came, a very great courtier.

Not long after Berger came there arrived a preposterous little man who, in his imperturbably objectionable way, never tired of watching Herr Berger and of laying involved snares for him. It is possible to say here, as he was told unnumbered times, that he resembled a toad, a snake, a rat, one of those dead-white blades of grass that has managed its crippled growth under a board lying in the meadow, a slug, a beetle, or an animal dropping. It is to be noted that all these analogies, invented for the most part by the outside world rather than by Madame Gelmotte's guests who had too genuine a respect for him, involve things that have their life close to the ground. And indeed the great and sole advantage that Harry Brown had enjoyed was always to have regarded all normal and life-sized matters from their underside. He loved the earth and ordure and primordials and, loving them, he knew them well. He knew them as common people know the face on a half-dollar or the *Lord's Prayer* or the ceiling of their bedroom. He was corruption and decay, his calling was to reduce again to earth everything that had presumed to evolve a little way out of primeval ooze. What he could not debase, he defaced, and what he could not deface, he bathed in slime. His knowledge of the privy life of men, animals and ferns was enormous; he worshipped and glorified what others ignore. Even when he was invisible (he made a practice of eavesdropping from under couches, in closets, behind curtains, lying in wait for hours for material), there was a pervading difference in the air that apprised others, almost unconsciously, that he was near.

By the time he appeared at Madame Gelmotte's he had managed by a method peculiar to himself to obtain control over half of the important names in Europe. Several years before he had begun to hire himself out to the street-cleaning companies of various European capitals. In each place he worked inconspicuously for a year until he had obtained charge of a wagon whose assignment was in one of the fashionable districts. As he set out in the morning, the sides of his dray were hung with burlap bags labelled, let us say, "Le Baron de Rohan," "Chancellor Krachtmann", "Premier Duquesne", and so forth, including all the names of the wealthy and the influential who happened to have residences on the streets his wagon patrolled. Thus, when he came to the house of the Baron de Rohan he emptied all the waste-paper that he collected from the waste-cans standing in the areaway into the burlap bag marked with the Baron's name. At Chancellor Krachtmann's, similarly, he deposited the Chancellor's refuse into the properly identified bag. And so on. These bags he took home at night, and all night he worked in his room, going over these forgotten, torn, sometimes unimportant and sometimes not at all unimportant scraps of receipted bills, memoranda, letters.

Harry Brown had a veritable genius for puzzles of all kinds, acrostics, secret codes, picture-puzzles, and the like, and an equal genius for inferring the whole from one of the parts. No one else without his talents could have duplicated the phenomenal success with which his amazingly simple assault on prestige and respectability was crowned. It was not long before he knew everything about the great ones whom he had selected for his offices: their businesses, their hobbies, their mistresses and lovers, their political and social intrigues, the stocks in which they were about to invest and those they were thinking of selling, even their secret thoughts, the words and the names they had scribbled idly on a blotter while waiting for a telephone call to be put through. A great part of Harry Brown's power over his prey came from the element of the supernatural which he invoked. His victims were often flatly unable

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to believe that he knew what he knew. But how could it be? It had been midnight when the Baron had burnt the letter and he had himself taken the charred stub and thrown it into the garbage can already standing on the curb for collection at dawn. None but one other man, who was as seriously involved as himself, knew. It was impossible. It was black magic. And he paid, almost with awe. And in fact, Harry Brown was almost magical. He never wasted an atom of his power, he never over-exerted it, it was impossible to lay hands on him. He was capable, in a metaphorical sense, of revealing himself in the vapors issuing from the stove, of running along the pathways of the rats in the wall, of coming up through the floor like escaping gas. And his magic was twice-brewed by virtue of the fact that he was able to seem to do these things by a trick that was so direct and obvious as to remain eternally undetectable. That chubby, Hogarthian face, unwashed, lecherous, impudent and astonishingly shrewd, was a familiar sight at the backdoors of the greatest houses of Europe. Harry Brown used such of his thus acquired influence as was not convertible into bank-notes with impassive diablerie.

Like Nature itself, he indulged in cruel and richly humorous pranks, sudden convulsions of unanswerable malice. He could afford to: he was very rich. He contrived by the slightest pressures here and there to bring to nothing the most heroic efforts of the most skilful statesmen. At a delicate stage of the negotiations, an anonymous letter with strangely authoritative proofs would make its appearance in the worst possible quarter. The chancellories of Europe came to dread and to expect these exposures of the perfidy of their allies. At every turn they were checkmated, merely by being told a truth that was as embarrassing to hear as it was to be accused of. For several years the crop of "honor suicides" among international politicians was unaccountably lush. Harry Brown would confess in public to everything he knew, withholding only the way he had obtained his information, but his confidences were so preposterous that he was known merely as a monumental liar. He was perfectly satisfied with this reputation, it saved him a great deal of bother. Indeed, it was his way to hide behind as many epithets as he could force others to confer on him. Every epithet was an added defense, a confirmation of the truth that he could go no lower. He drew himself further into the beautiful, the obscene earth and disappeared into it, into the world-old and all-wise manure of the unthinkable secrets of creation and death. Presently men standing on firm ground felt it crumbling under them and they vanished into Harry Brown's tunnelled honeycombs.

There appeared tardily at Madame Gelmotte's the mathematician Lindgren from Sweden. He was very poor, the greatest mathematician of his time, and he permitted three satellites to accompany him so that he might have someone who could more or less understand him. To these three men subsequently accrued a fame which they had well earned in the effort to remember Lindgren's theorems so long as was necessary to reach paper, compass and triangle. Lindgren had learnt all that was to be learnt, by the age of twenty-five, since when, some thirty years at the time of his arrival at Madame Gelmotte's, he had not seen a book or written on paper. He was accustomed to work out the most advanced and esoteric problems in his head and to facilitate this procedure he had fallen into the habit of always thinking and talking in a dark room. Of course he could have closed his eyes, but this made him somnolent and he would always have greatly preferred sleeping even to working in differential calculus. The dark, on the other hand, brought him wide awake and sharpened to the ultimate genius his extraordinary powers. From a device it became an affectation and then a habit; at length Lindgren would not open his mouth if he could be seen. This also made it difficult for the three young men,

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who were unable to transcribe his solutions in the dark, but, though they missed a great deal, what they carried away was more than enough for twenty times three reputations.

The arrival of this strange troupe was a curious one. Ten years of dogging the heels and nourishing the flesh of the master had altogether exhausted the financial resources of the three young men. One of them heard of Madame Gelmotte's salon, and presently all three were on hand, fearfully emaciated (they had not eaten in four days). They did not wait to gobble the food they had snatched but staggered back with it through the streets of Paris to the room where in the pitch dark Lindgren was still reciting the three possible solutions to a hitherto insoluble problem. As the master abstractedly fed, they fed too, feverishly speculating on how much they had missed. That night, after the lights had been turned on and Lindgren had dozed off, they returned to Madame Gelmotte's. They were objects of some interest and several of the company approached them, but they heard no one, they were dreadfully in earnest about their errand. They found one of the maids and finally persuaded her to get a carpenter the next day to build in one corner of one of the rooms a very thin, absolutely light-proof but not sound-proof closet of beaver-board, with hooded air-holes for ventilation. This was not difficult and Madame Gelmotte gave her vague consent. The next afternoon they moved Lindgren in. Three times a night they promenaded him through the rooms and ended at the free-lunch counter. During the day they were all four to be found sleeping around the rooms. The new arrangement was vastly preferred to the old by the three young men. Lindgren was able to think in the dark, they were able to take notes out in the lighted room, and thenceforward the completeness of their notes was limited only by their comprehension, a considerable limitation, nevertheless. They were scarcely aware of anyone except the master and one another, though they occasionally declaimed, in a semi-intelligible delirium, of the earth-shaking genius and the Homeric feats of Lindgren.

If it is possible to say of any of these men that he was an humanitarian, one may say it of Paul Philippe Chabannes, though he was, more precisely, a disappointed humanitarian. He alone was not completely able to reconcile himself to the admission that all men are either fools or scoundrels, but in either case out of stupidity, top-dog or under-dog, bullying or bullied. It was merely that, at eighty, he was still so alive that he could not embrace the idea of unaliveness in any form. It was physically necessary for him to react to any stimulus and he continued so to do. Whereas his fellows smiled the more broadly or turned more melancholy at word of some new and magnificent human imbecility, Chabannes became magnificently angry. He wrote enormous quantities of material directed to illuminate the world a little way. He wrote with the concision of Pope and the spleen of Voltaire but with more "style" than either. He had never paid the slightest attention to the "Art for Art's sake" conception of literature, he wrote only when he had something violent to say, he always said it perfectly and he never crossed out a word. And he had never heard of writing for the "magazine market". He chiefly wrote essays not under fifteen thousand words in length, splendid ironic diatribes. But he would say it in anything: epigrams, epitaphs, short verse, epic verse: anything except fiction in any form. He absolutely refused to dilute the intent of anything he had to say by watering it with characters and a plot, the comedy of situation, social satire and a moral discreetly disguised. Finally, with the exception of an essay in an obscure political quarterly, he did not, until he was seventy and beginning the fifteen-year ceremony of dying of a cancer, get anything published. There, then, was this gigantic and terrible figure, this great scourge and chastener and purifier of men, flaying with the bitter and blinding force of his

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intellect and the purity of his pity the poor viscera of men—and no one knew he was there. No one had ever heard of Paul Chabannes.

Then at seventy he happened to send a sheaf of epigrams by mistake to a comic magazine. The comic magazine published them all, they were a great success, *they were very funny*. What a famous joke! Chabannes laughed. Ha, ha! He laughed for two days. And then he began to think. What was the difference? Of course, he did not want his name signed and thereafter he sent out his epigrams, short verses and jokes anonymously to the comic magazines and they were always accepted, even though the editors did not know to whom they were indebted. He wrote as many essays and books as ever, sending them out in a rain of fire, receiving them back and throwing them away when the occasion for their writing had passed, but the short things required a half-hour once a week. In a small way (as compared with the magnitude of his intentions) he had his effect. The number of ideas in circulation among humorous writers, from Aristophanes on, had been up to that time a quantity that can be indicated by the number, 1. Chabannes increased the number of ideas in circulation among humorous writers to a quantity that can be indicated by the number, 100. It remains at that figure today.

So much and no more the world permitted Chabannes to do for it. But at Madame Gelmotte's he was all-hailed, he was probably the greatest master of conversation ever to appear on the earth. He came to his greatest virtuosity four or five times a week, when his cancer asserted the core of death inside him, when in an agony he asserted in quiet radiant words the power and the glory of life and assaulted the Saragossas of infamy and dulness, philippics that were in reality only a denial of the fact of his cancer. On one such occasion, he gave an analysis of the proper uses of satire, its technic and a complete account of its misuse through the ages. It was superb and justified itself. But it so happened that a young man, who had heard of this formidable company, had strayed in that evening. The young man was famous over all the western world as a satirist, he was the very devil of a fellow, he knew that he was immeasurably superior to any man he had ever met and he was unbroken in the pride of his intellect. Harry Brown, hardly daring to believe his eyes at sight of so choice a delicacy, was beginning to take some notice of him when Chabannes commenced to talk. The young man, who was not lost to virtue, went home afterwards, arranged his affairs and disappeared. Chabannes never knew he had done the world another little good turn.

All of those who have so far been named were completely and terribly sane, but Madame Gelmotte's guests numbered among them their insane members, those altogether demented as well as those with a single black spot on their brains, a madness in one particular. It came, however, to the same thing, since in that company the men with a single madness were not permitted ever to forget it. Indeed, the company took a singular pleasure in surrounding itself with unbalanced specimens of mankind. With them they felt at last a kind of consanguinity and, so long as these remained mad, the company received immense solace and benefit from them. In a strange way, too, these poor maniacs were immune among Madame Gelmotte's guests; they became almost sane where sane men would have lost their minds. For they too were lepers, whom society found unintelligible and to whom the words of normal men sounded like a babbling.

The madmen, however, contributed but one strand to the motley of that gathering. There were from five to ten Orientals, the foremost a Chinaman, the descendant of a great Buddhist poet of the Han Dynasty. Two thousand years of breeding had produced an organism as brittle as a dead leaf, but a very beautiful dead leaf. His ancestors for a thousand years before him had been

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as perishable but they had not failed to propagate, nor had Ku K'ai-chih, as the four grown sons who appeared at one time bore witness. They were exact replicas of their father (although all had been born of different mothers) except that a little sap seemed still to run through them. The strain was evidently a powerful one, it did not permit a vestige of the absorbed strains to appear. Ku K'ai-chih seemed to be of an unimaginable age. His movements were comparable in rapidity and grace to the opening under the sun of the petals of a rose. Every motion, even to the laying aside of a pipe, was separated into its thousand parts and executed in a sacred and antique design. For his conversation, in a convention no less antique, he composed extemporaneously flowery and epigrammatic verses in whatever language his auditor spoke. The translations of Chinese poetry which the West knows give no hint of the overlapping subtleties, the concentric circles of meaning, the delayed poison, with which he infused his leisurely and flawless rhymes in any one of twenty-three languages and twice that number of dialects. His daily bath was a ceremony that several of the company never missed. It required three hours and was said to be unbelievably perfect, transcending, in the art of manipulating the human body, anything else ever seen. But at the end of a year Ku K'ai-chih, for some mysterious reason, quitted the rooms.

He had been, however, an anachronism, although a perfect one. The majority of the guests had come from nowhere and nothing. Many of them could not have, and none would have, traced his ancestors past his mother. In a fundamental sense, none of them had any origins; they had sprung full-formed from the void. It was true that there were some dozen members, distant or immediate, of royal families, presently reigning or long since overthrown, but, with one or two exceptions, they were the most slovenly vagrants there. There was a Russian who had brought to its perfection the art of confession, never looking away from a mirror which he held continually before his face and revealing literally everything that passed through his consciousness, in a dismaying and unanswerable miracle of naïveté. There was a man whose battle against boredom compelled him to submit to various self-tortures, including all the practices of Hindu fakirs, as well as singeing, extinguishing cigarettes on his wrist or his forehead, assuming paralyzing postures, holding his breath until he was on the verge of drowning, applying tourniquets to his limbs, and so on, all for the sake of the spiritual cleansings that he could find only in pain. There was a half-witted Irishman who had the gift of pantomime, the funniest man who ever lived, who could in a moment paralyze the most saturnine with laughter by a movement of the face and a gesture of the hands, the most expressive, pathetic and comic. There were all kinds of oddities, aberrations, nonesuches scattered through the four rooms, and each was the only one of its kind.

Sometimes there was a comparative silence for two days, then a word would strike fire, the impassive duelling would begin, would become general, involving everyone who came near, spreading through the rooms like a breaking wave. Harry Brown would speculate on the identity of the curious odor that had come lately from Herr Berger, whether it came from potassium iodide, arsenobenzol or salvarsan; Herr Berger would offer his bland superficialities to the bland profundities of Ku K'ai-chih. An unknown would defend against Chabannes the advantages of any and all moral codes, while John Stuart debated with a man standing on his head whether ambition or honor were the more absurd. Two men who had been arguing the case of destiny *versus* free will paused while a Russian told them what he heard when he listened to himself listening to them. Madame Gelmotte in a dazed way asked a man who was thus obliged to interrupt an experiment in self-strangulation, whence came the

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mathematic jargon which Lindgren was intoning from behind his beaverboard, while three young men outside took notes and exchanged frantic whispers back and forth. Chabannes was dying of his cancer and John Stuart, who had a kind of love for Chabannes, knew the cure for cancer. It seemed to Stuart, however, the fillip to his highly moral joke that he should permit Chabannes, who was worth five hundred years of civilization, to die. But one day he brought himself to make Chabannes an offer: that he would cure him of his cancer if he would stop writing and destroy all of his work that he still had by him: thus he would give him a choice of two deaths instead of one. Chabannes, after a moment's thought, took the one he was already committed to, and began at once to recite a series of epigrams based on Æsop's *Fables,* designed to show by pure sophistry that no man lives in vain.

Talk goes on eternally over the continents, rising in muddy vapors, unlit except by the wan flickering of an intermittent idea that is gone so soon that it seems to have been an hallucination to the one or two who saw it. But it is established that in at least one place in all time, the talk was pure vital fire, converting into bright, consuming life the living and the dead alike. It is good to know this and to warm our hands distantly at the knowledge.

The thrice-diluted reports of that incredible company, who were joined by some mysterious set of conjunctions in a place without meaning on a year that is gone, have the sound of an ancient legend told by goatherds who believed they had seen the earth open up and pour forth the cavalry of Lucifer. Their casual assembling, their brief and antic reign, their vanishing, are attended with mystery, they seem an omen more meaningful than idle floods, earthquakes and eruptions. But the meaning is not clear. Nothing is known of them but that they were for a little while the guests of that improbable Madame Gelmotte of Paris.

There—it is all we know—in Madame's great rooms with their vague smell of a railway station lavatory, they sat, making the great talk, rehearsing on unholy rosaries the undying and at once forgotten words. Through the eyes of the metaphor it is possible to see them, not as men but as the man-of-war hawks, the albatrosses filling the high airs of the Rock Rodondo with their clamor. But the allusion with which this account was begun is not the final one. The equatorial Pacific falls away and dries to cinders about them. Their forms are not the forms of birds. The lenses of another metaphor bring to bear and it is seen that this is no company known to the face of the earth. Man is an uneasy guest here. There is no human health on the tortured frozen beds of this eternal lava. For these are those fallen angels of whom Milton spoke, whose unspeakable Crime was the crime of inquiry, the great demons on their thrones, conversing of "fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute".

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# CARLYLE: FROM ECCLEFECHAN TO THE WORLD

*by John Macy*

How inexpressibly comfortable to know our fellow-creature; to see into him, understand his goings-forth, decipher the whole heart of his mystery: nay, not only to see into him, but even to see out of him, to view the world altogether as he views it; so that we can theoretically construe him, and could almost practically personate him; and do now thoroughly discern both what manner of man he is, and what manner of thing he has got to work and live on!"

So writes Carlyle in the essay on *Biography*. From the beginning of his career as writer Carlyle was chiefly interested in persons, in men, in character. And though Carlyle's influence may be waning, there has been a ceaseless interest in his biography, his personality. His Reminiscences and Letters and the Letters of Jane Carlyle make a story which engages us as absorbingly as any which he found in his studies of men and ideas. And if that story is confused and tingling with controversy, there is a kind of poetic justice in it; for it is just such a story as he liked to deal with and sometimes clarified, sometimes made more bewildering. He sometimes only half understood or misunderstood the ideas of the men he tried to analyze, but it is always the man, the individual, whom he seeks to discover. He is by instinct a dramatist, though he never works in technical dramatic form. He insists that the man is greater than his work, whereas most of us think that it is a man's work that counts and that explanation of his character has only a secondary and supplementary value.

In the early *Life of Schiller* there is abundant enthusiasm for the dramas, with much bad translation; but Carlyle's real excitement begins to rise with the words: "Schiller gives a fine example of the German Character". So he does. But the important thing about Schiller is that he was poet and dramatist. In the *Essay on Burns,* Carlyle says that "true and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us". Yet if Burns had not been a poet, we should never have heard of him and Carlyle would never have written an essay about him. Carlyle proceeds to account for Burns's popularity in terms of his "sincerity, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys". Did Carlyle ever read "The Jolly Beggars" or "Tam o' Shanter"? In this essay on Burns, with its incidental remarks on Byron, we see Carlyle, the Puritan, in quest of solemn Truth and, for all his own humor and poetry, blind to art, beauty, joyousness. We also find the beginning of the strange style which was to become exaggerated in later work—a style perverse, grotesque, eloquent, swarming with metaphors. Among the writers of the Nineteenth Century only Browning and Meredith have such a multitudinous rush of images. Carlyle shocked the academics and baffled the general reading public. Arnold advises us to flee Carlylese as we would flee the devil.



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But Ruskin, whose style is immaculate and as well-bred as Arnold's, sat at Carlyle's feet, and in many ways saw more clearly than his master. Carlyle pounded and thundered his way into literature with the simple text that the proper study of mankind is man, as studied by Carlyle.

And it is, taken as a whole, a magnificent study. It is clouded with prejudices, misunderstandings of the facts, even by what seem like downright misrepresentations of the facts, but vivid as Hell at the very moments when Carlyle thought he was soaring in the serene Heaven of Justice and Truth. He is an incorrigible Protestant parson, and in spite of his sardonic humor he never recovers from the superstition that he is in partnership with God for the instruction of humanity. His early essays, probably due to Jeffrey and other editorial influences, have a conventional amenity. The essay on Scott is a sort of prelude to *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. Scott is not quite a hero to Carlyle, but a sagacious, genial, successful man of the world, brave in struggling to recover from financial disaster. His bravery was, however, not the sort to win the approval of Carlyle, who thinks that Scott should have said, "Hitherto I have been all wrong, and this my fame and pride, now broken, was an empty delusion and spell of accursed witchcraft". It did not occur to Carlyle that Scott was striving not only to retrieve his own fortunes but to pay the enormous debt caused by the failure of his publishers, which he assumed like an honorable man, though he legally could have escaped at least part of the obligation. When Carlyle says that it was not Constable's bankruptcy, but ambition, false ambition, that ruined Scott, we begin to ask in just what morality, common or uncommon honesty consists. True, if Scott had not spent so much money he would not have been so heavily in debt, but he thought he had a right to the money he spent; and he had, for he had earned it. This, a mere episodic comment in Carlyle's vast work, is important, because it is an especially clear expression of his life-long irreconcilability with the world of commerce and practical affairs. In an important sense he never knew the world he lived in, though he was a working author and had to deal with booksellers himself! His critical misunderstanding of Scott or spiritual difference from him is perfectly intelligible and not in the least to the discredit of either man of genius. Carlyle had a message. Scott had none, but wrote merely to amuse the great public.

Carlyle's essays on German literature were fresh material, for except this same entertaining Sir Walter and a rival of Carlyle as preacher and interpreter of the Universe, Coleridge, whom he did not admire, Carlyle was the first English writer to bring the poetry and philosophy of Germany to English readers. English readers were not greatly interested in German writers, and the editors, receiving little encouragement from the public, grew indifferent to the essays on German subjects, and finally cried, "No more".

But Carlyle's study of German was essential to his first masterpiece, *Sartor Resartus*, in which he found his idiom. It is no wonder that publishers rejected this bizarre book or that after it began to appear in *Fraser's Magazine* readers did not take kindly to it. We may remember with pleasure that Emerson recognized its genius and promoted its fortunes in America. *Sartor* is a *kolossal* mixture, a satire on the human race with a slightly Swiftian touch and a sad Nineteenth Century brooding on life and destiny, all shot through with a wild eccentric humor. We are clothed in order to be denuded. Clothes are the trapping, through which mankind is seen as the naked forked radish. *Sartor* is a rag-bag for everything that Carlyle had been thinking for years. So that it has not the clear thought, the sharp edge, of true satire; it has piercing, sharp points but as a whole it is blunt as a bludgeon.

Carlyle was aware of the defects of *Sartor* and asks: "Thus has not the Editor himself, working over Teufelsdröckh's German, lost

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much of his own English purity?" The unsympathetic reader may wonder what in the world Carlyle had to do with English purity. Yet for all his whimsical oddities and mannerisms Carlyle did have a sense of English purity and some of his sentences are as clear and sound as any in English prose. He was a reader of the English classics; and that part of his style which he ascribed to his father was the purest kind of English with a Scots flavor. One thing is certain: except in the deliberately German-sounding phrases which keep the tone and character of Teufelsdröckh, Carlyle's style is not German. The classic German prose which he read is not in the least riotous or eccentric, but rather formal, elegant, even stilted. The Sartorial dialect is Carlyle's own creation, his natural mode of expression, and he wrote it to the end of his life. A man's language must be largely traditional or it will not be understood; and Carlyle is as a rule intelligible, if often queer and irritating. A hundred years ago when England was just emerging from the cool clarity of the Eighteenth Century, and the romantics had not disturbed that clarity but only enriched it with poetry, *Sartor* seemed foreign, un-English. It was not the style, however, that puzzled its first readers, but the substance. The mannerisms, abnormalities of the style are not greater than those of *Tristram Shandy*. But the thought is puzzle-headed, and seemed much more so to our great-grandfathers than to us. Time accepts a work of strange new power and rubs down the excrescences. But the new revolutionary work must have power. Mere craziness, even honest rebellion, if untouched by genius does not endure. Time has accepted *Sartor* as an extraordinary and original book. For it is as original as a book can be. It is streaked in a rather indefinite way with German idealism. The critics have amused themselves trying to identify this and that idea with one German philosopher or another. Hegel is specifically named, and Goethe of course. Fichte's idea of a divinely or morally governed universe seems to be there in a shadowy way. The influence of the humor of Jean Paul Richter has been noted. But Carlyle did not know the German philosophers in detail and in his writings he only echoes them—without citing chapter and verse. Teufelsdröckh is, of course, no German but Carlyle himself, mystical and perplexed and spiritually unhappy, trying to solve the riddle of the universe. Carlyle had not the philosophic mind of the German thinkers or even of his countrymen, the Scottish metaphysicians; and as he could find no answer to the Unknowable himself, he fell back to the position that it was not only useless but impious to try to fathom it.

## II

He sought rather to know himself. The heart of *Sartor,* so far as this amorphous essay has organic structure, is the passage from the Everlasting No through the Centre of Indifference to the Everlasting Yea. Some such spiritual progress, though not in such fantastic and tumultuous terms, has been the experience of many men; so that the book becomes more than the autobiography of a single soul; it reaches out and includes many of us even after a century, even into the present period of disillusion and scepticism. We start in doubt and torment, wandering hopelessly (Everlasting No) go through a kind of baptismal fire, are "calcined", realize that we are Nobody anyway and do not care much (Centre of Indifference) and then discover that our business in life is not Happiness but the task nearest at hand. "Work while it is called Today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work." That seems to be good sensible doctrine for people of any creed or time. It is the simplest and most positive of Carlyle's preachments; he expressed it in many ways for many years; it is at the bottom of his Hero-Worship, his reverence for people who did things. And he was man enough to eat his own bread, in spite of

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many dyspeptic growlings. His indigestion was intellectual not physical; he lived to a hale old age and was never in bed in the daytime. He was devoted to his work, no man more faithfully and honestly, and if some of it is not good it is as good as he knew how to make it.

Such is the plain prose meaning of *Sartor*. But this book is more than prose. It is in many passages a prose poem. Just as Carlyle was a dramatist who never worked in dramatic form, so he was a poet who never worked in poetic form. Indeed, his attempts at verse in his translations are abominable, cacophonous; and he had no ear for the lyric loveliness of English poetry. But his prose is often gorgeous with imagery and has splendid sweeping rhythms. I quote a passage which gives a taste of the style and the philosophy and which also suggests a curious contradiction:

> Poor Teufelsdröckh! Flying from Hunger always parallel to him; and a whole Infernal Chase in his rear; so that the countenance of Hunger is comparatively a friend's! Thus must he, in the temper of ancient Cain, or of the modern Wandering Jew—save only that he feels himself not guilty and but suffering the pains of guilt—wend to and fro with aimless speed. Thus must he, over the whole surface of the Earth (by footprints), write his Sorrows of Teufelsdröckh; even as the great Goethe, in passionate words, had to write his Sorrows of Werther, before the spirit freed herself, and he could become a Man. Vain truly is the hope of your swiftest Runner to escape "from his own shadow"! Nevertheless in these sick days, when the Born of Heaven first descries himself (about the age of twenty) in a world such as ours, richer than usual in two things, in Truths grown obsolete,—what can the fool think but that it is all a Den of Lies, wherein whoso will not speak Lies and act Lies, must stand idle and despair? Whereby it happens that, for your nobler minds, the publishing of some such Work of Art, in one or the other dialect, becomes a necessity. For what is it properly but an Altercation with the Devil, before you begin honestly fighting him? Your Byron publishes his Sorrows of Lord George, in verse and in prose, and copiously otherwise: your Bonaparte represents his Sorrows of Napoleon Opera, in an all-too stupendous style; with music of cannon-volleys, and murder-shrieks of the world; his stage-lights are the fires of Conflagration; his rhyme and recitative are the tramp of embattled Hosts and the sound of falling Cities. Happier is he who, like our Clothes-Philosopher, can write such matter, since it must be written, on the insensible Earth, with his shoe-soles only; and also survive the writing thereof!

Now this is the curious contradiction or paradox. Carlyle admired *Werther* because it was written by the great Goethe (which is probably the case with most readers of Goethe); he despised Byron; no Briton a hundred years ago, even a hero-worshipper, could be in love with Napoleon. But the passage, no matter what the illustrations, is directed against the young egotist who pours out his sufferings in a wail of conceit. Teufelsdröckh writes in silence with his wandering footprints. Carlyle does not. *Sartor* is itself *The Sorrows of Carlyle*, an addition to the very type of which the passage treats. Carlyle is a perfect example of the man who dislikes in others the faults that he has himself (we are all like that, but most of us cannot express the conflict so completely). He hated cant and had his own private cant. He detested Byron, whose heroes, even in the dramas, are all Byron himself in melancholy or desperate or pessimistic and sometimes humorous, contest with the world. If one suggested that Carlyle resembled Byron in any way, he would turn in his grave. But there is this resemblance: that Carlyle's work is one long imposition of himself upon every subject that he touches, and in a much stronger sense than the ordinary commonplace sense, that every writer puts himself into his work; and there is the further resemblance that the long prose story of The Sorrows of Carlyle did not stop in his early manhood but was continued into his later work. The letters and Reminiscences have a right to be personal. And of course I do not mean that in all the

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many subjects he touched he was autobiographical or personal.

Yet note that for all his dramatic power and ability to envisage a scene objectively he cannot keep himself out of it. His genuine pity for suffering humanity is a transferred self-pity, and his cynical contempt for the human fool is largely a mask for his sympathy. The heroes he chooses to celebrate, certainly the traits which he emphasizes, express his own character. It is this intense and overpowering sense of himself and his own emotions which makes him an untrustworthy biographer and historian, incapable of taking a detached dispassionate point of view, and at the same time it is the very limitation which makes his portraits so blazingly alive. He himself said of *The French Revolution* that his convictions came "flamingly from the heart". There must be some feeling in the work of any historian or biographer who writes more than a dead, dry chronicle, and we know there is some truth in Mark Twain's epigram that the very ink with which history is written is fluid prejudice. But imagine a modern historian, a Lord Acton, or for that matter an old "unscientific" historian, a Clarendon or a Gibbon, making such an unblushing confession of emotion! And the subject was the French Revolution, in which there was no reason for Carlyle's passions to be engaged, except that the whole great complicated drama must excite anybody who has a spark of imagination. Carlye had more than a spark. He had, as we might say with his own emphatic capital, an entire Conflagration.

The faults of *The French Revolution* are evident. Carlyle did not understand the political and economic causes of the Revolution (nor any too well the politics and economics of his own country). He visualized it as the righteous revolt of the downtrodden against sinful tyranny. It is true that the people were downtrodden under the tyranny of centuries. But the poor and oppressed were not the instigators of the uprising. It was the middle classes that rebelled against the aristocracy and they cared no more about the poor than did the King and the nobles. In some countries, England for example, political power, following economic power, has passed without bloodshed from the old aristocracy to the next privileged class, the bourgeoisie, business people. In France the Revolution got beyond control, and Hell broke loose.

It is this Hell which Carlyle pictures with volcanic power, even justifying, with a strange moral exultation, the Reign of Terror. It was the vengeance of the Lord. The narrative is not a coherent account of the sequence, relations, causes of events, but a brilliant succession of scenes, portraits, conflicts. The materials of history are converted by a man who is instinctively dramatist, poet, maker of fiction, into a vast epic. Carlyle selected what is picturesque, effective, the details and episodes that caught his eye and fired his fancy, strung it all on a very dubious religious-ethical thesis, and created a great work of art. There are plenty of sober historians to straighten the facts out and give us a cool analysis of what happened and why. Only Carlyle could have conceived this drama, which in its very chaos, tension and fire presents the subject with a kind of truth impossible to a more balanced and reasonable history. The style fits the theme.

## III

Next to Carlyle's gospel of work and duty, and perhaps more important, is his doctrine of reverence for the good and the great. This doctrine he expounds not so much by exhortation (though there is plenty of that in all his writings) as by celebrating leaders of various types who have risen above the common mass of humanity and so raised the mass. *Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* is on the whole the most attractive of Carlyle's books, for everybody can respond to its fine enthusiasm; it is not confused and perplexing, as is much of *Sartor;*

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it does not excite controversy, as do many of his pamphlets and *The French Revolution* and *Frederick the Great* also. Moreover in *Heroes* Carlyle exhibits his supreme gift, the biographical, the understanding, his own understanding, of the characters of men. With the growth of democracy and also with the increase of historical interest in the large movements of nations and races, the great-man theory of history became somewhat discredited. Historians ask not only what kings and leaders did but what the people did, what ideas moved them. Of late there seems to have been a reaction toward the great-man view or, rather, perhaps a union of the two views resulting in an all-round and more nearly complete understanding. Whatever historians say, most of us are instinctively hero-worshippers; the past is a kind of museum of statues and monuments, a temple of shrines.

We of the herd do not like the herd; we demand to hear, to read of those who are better than we. It is a wholesome instinct, and Carlyle had it to an excessive degree. In a way it is a denial of democracy. Carlyle was no democrat. Having been poor himself, he honors "the toilworn Craftsman" with "hard Hand, crooked, coarse", but he has no message for the worker but to exhort him to toil on and reverence and obey his superiors. Second, and more highly, he honors the spiritual toiler, the thinker who conquers heaven for us. This idea, first expressed in the eloquent chapter on "Helotage" in *Sartor,* is developed in *Heroes.* Our salvation lies in intellectual and spiritual obedience to the emergent few who have shown the way. But Carlyle is himself too independent to counsel servile obedience. Self-subsistence, originality, are not incompatible with reverence and belief in other men's truths, but compel us to disbelieve "other men's formulas, hearsays and untruths". Carlyle is a thoroughgoing individualist and quite as much a preacher of self-reliance as Emerson, though much less democratic and with less confidence in ordinary human nature.

Carlyle's *Heroes* are not a private Hall of Fame, and he does not write a mere series of biographies. He chooses men to illustrate the various phases of heroism: the hero as Divinity, Odin; the Prophet, Mahomet; the Poet, Dante and Shakespeare; the Priest, Luther and Knox; the Man of Letters, Johnson, Rousseau, Burns; the King, Cromwell, Napoleon. He tries to get at the secret heart, the meaning of these men, and so reveals to us the best of his own heart and meaning. His supreme hero was Cromwell whose *Letters and Speeches* he edited with "Elucidations". He "edited" the Cromwell documents with the same freedom which the pious Dr. Jared Sparks allowed himself in preparing Washington's letters for the public, and which (ironically enough!) Froude allowed himself in manipulating the Carlyle letters. The portrait that comes out on Carlyle's canvas seems to violate Cromwell's injunction to the painter to paint him "wart and all". The work is wholly in praise of Cromwell; a true Carlyle hero can do no wrong. But to get what is admirable in Carlyle we must yield to his admirations and then make critical reservations in our more modern sceptical spirit which asks *What, How, When, Why?*

I have said that Carlyle was no democrat and this is true if democracy means popular self-government. In *Past and Present* there is a strangely confused chapter on "Democracy" in the old *Sartor* manner and repeating the doctrine of *Heroes.* He has only contempt for political democracy, votes, and for Democracy "which means despair of finding any Heroes to govern you". But he also despises Mock-Superiors and Mammonism. *Past and Present* contains most of Carlyle's opinions of the practical world in which he lived and which he thunderously scolded. With his instinct for dramatic effect he illuminates the present by contrasting it with the past, which is represented by a Twelfth Century chronicle of the wise and devoted "Ancient Monk",

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Abbot Samson. Like many of the Nineteenth Century romanticists Carlyle was a lover of the past, of the Middle Ages when life was simpler and no more brutal perhaps than today. It is easy to find the virtues of other ages than our own. Also like many of his contemporaries, Carlyle distrusted and disliked the age of industry and steam and smoke and noise, and he saw, as did Mill with more wisdom and reason, that the age of machinery had done little for the workers.

It is easy to see the vices of our own time. Carlyle had no solution for "that alarming problem of the Working Classes" except his familiar creed of Hero-Worship and a rather vague notion of the Worker as working with a new nobility—the "Chivalry of Labor", which, as a worker might say, sounds fine but has nothing to do with the case. A modern champion of Labor or of Liberty or of Progress of any kind will find much to inspire him in Ruskin, in Mill, in Morris, perhaps even in Dickens; he will look to Carlyle in vain for a helpful idea. "All speech and rumour are short-lived, foolish, untrue. Genuine WORK alone, what thou workest faithfully, that is eternal, as the Almighty Founder and World-Builder himself"—that is eloquent but it butters no parsnips. The strength of *Past and Present* is its sense of the continuity of the present from the past, the "stream of history"; its smashing attacks on dilettantes, windbags, and idlers; and the stunning phrases, some of which have passed into the current language, for example, Captains of Industry (Carlyle also has Captains of Idleness). The characteristic humor is here. Since the ants are industrious and lay up stores, there must be a Bank of Antland. If Carlyle is open to question as Historian, Seer, Prophet, Moral Teacher, he certainly holds a high place among the English Humorists.

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# THE LAWYER LOOKS AT DETECTIVE FICTION

*by John Barker Waite*
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IT IS an easy matter to convict a murderer —in books! The writer of mystery stories has only to set his dauntless detective spinning analyses and collecting evidence, and the culprit is inevitably led repining to the death cell.

The chief reason justice is so much better served in fiction than in reality is that the mythical detective enjoys enormous advantages over actual investigators. The storybook hero can get his man by all manner of devices prohibited in real life—from breaking-and-entering to conniving with United States postal officials to rob the mails. Detective novels are few in which the protagonist does not accomplish some brilliant stroke in flagrant violation of the law. Furthermore, when it comes to trying the prisoner on the strength of the evidence the usual detective collects to support his brilliant hypotheses, what looks so invulnerable in print would make him a laughing-stock if introduced in an actual court of justice.

Not, of course, that it would be unreal to write about arrests which did not result in convictions. Police reports tabulate a large proportion of criminal homicides as "cleared by arrest" when nothing has happened but the arrest of a suspect charged with a particular crime. He may be in no danger of conviction. Often the arrest has been made for no better reason than that the police want to still a clamorous and embarrassing press. On the great majority of such occasions the available evidence is wholly inadequate to convince a trial jury or even to gain a hearing of the state's case. Detective fiction, in this regard, is most life-like: where it departs from reality is in the author's naïve assurance that the suspect was actually and in due form convicted.

Mr. J. S. Fletcher, who is himself a lawyer, must have realized the inherent weakness of his case in *The Strange Case of Mr. Henry Marchmont,* for he does not assert that the accused was ultimately punished, but merely that he was arrested and led away protesting. And good reason he had to protest!

It will be recalled that in this tale Marchmont had been shot in the back while ascending the stairs in his own home, and that coincidentally with his death, bank notes to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars were stolen from an upstairs room. No less than six persons had strong reason to desire Marchmont's death:

John Landsdale { *Whose real identity Marchmont had discovered and was threatening to reveal, to the ruin of a business coup Landsdale was about to execute.*

Vandelius..... { *Who with Landsdale was interested in the deal.*



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| Granch and Garner | *Who also stood to profit if the negotiations were successful, and who were in sore need of money.* |
| Simpson | *Marchmont's clerk, to whom would go a fifty-thousand-dollar legacy upon Marchmont's death.* |
| Cora Sanderthwaite | *Half-mad enemy of Landsdale, who might have committed the murder in the belief that Marchmont was Landsdale* |

Each of these six persons had had opportunity to fire the fatal shot. Moreover, all of them except Vandelius could be proved to have been at the scene of the murder at about the time the tragedy occurred. Considering all the evidence described in the book, the most plausibly guilty was Garner. It is true that after he had been plunged to his death from the rotten bridge in his attempt to escape pursuers, a letter was found on his person which attempted to divert suspicion to Vandelius and Cora Sanderthwaite; in it Garner admitted the theft of a few gold coins but denied guilt of the murder, declaring he had seen Cora outside the Marchmont home at the time of the crime, and that he had observed Vandelius leaving the house immediately afterward.

This letter, however, would not have been admitted as evidence against either Vandelius or Cora by any court of law in England or America. Neither as a matter of strict law nor of common sense could such a document be properly used: it was a self-serving declaration by a man who had every reason to direct suspicion away from himself. Whereas his letter was self-incriminatory of larceny, such an admission might have been made solely to lend verisimilitude to his denial of the major crime. It is even possible that he mistook Cora and Vandelius; it happens frequently that an honest witness admits his own error of identification when forced by cross-examination into an analysis of the situation. It is for such reasons that our constitutions give every man on trial for crime the right to demand confrontation by the witnesses against him. There is no question that the letter would have been kept out.

There was, indeed, nothing at all to negative Garner's probable guilt. Any fairly intelligent police officer would have charged him with the crime.

As to Vandelius there was no evidence at all, save the fact that his visiting card was on the card-tray in Marchmont's living room. And yet, out of all these possibilities, and with the imposing array of facts against Garner, it was Vandelius who was arrested as the murderer! The case against him consisted almost entirely of speculations as to how he *might* have committed the crime. Mr. Fletcher showed his acquaintance with realities in ending his story with the mere fact of Vandelius's arrest. In real life, Vandelius would have been freed at once. No English or American examining magistrate will even hold a suspect for trial simply because he *could* have committed a crime, without any evidence that he *did* commit it —especially when there is cogent evidence that another person is more likely to have done it. Had Vandelius by some chance been put on trial, no jury would have convicted; or, had the unprecedented happened, the Appellate Court would have reversed the conviction for lack of evidence. It was only a few months ago that the Illinois Supreme Court reversed a conviction of the notorious Shelton brothers * with the statement that "a conviction of crime cannot rest upon probabilities alone, but the proof must be sufficient to remove all reasonable doubt that the defendant, and not somebody else, com-

* People v. O'Hara, Illinois, 1928, 163 N. E. 804.

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mitted the crime, and it is not incumbent on the defendant to prove who did commit it".

In *The Room with the Tassels,* Carolyn Wells is not so careful as Mr. Fletcher. She goes further and states that her suspect was arrested "and received his just deserts". If by this statement Miss Wells means to imply that John Tracy was convicted of murder, she is somewhat in error. There is no evidence presented that Tracy committed the murders. True, he might have done so, but it is ridiculous to suppose that he was guilty merely because no other person was proved guilty. It is well-settled law that the state must prove affirmatively; the accused is under no obligation to prove himself innocent; innocence is presumed until the contrary is demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt.

The confession of Rudolph Braye that he hired Tracy to commit the crime would be excluded from any Anglo-American court as unreliable, hearsay evidence. This is not a mere legal technicality operating to the defeat of justice: the point is that the detectives' plausible theories of guilt are in no way facts proving guilt. No actual court will convict a defendant solely on another man's guesses. The Tracy case, had it been real, would have been another murder "cleared by arrest", but with no subsequent conviction.

The real trial of the Reverend Mr. Avery * for the murder of Sarah Cornell instances what actually happens in such cases. Avery had reason to desire Sarah's death. She had left in her bag a note suggesting that "if she should be missing", he could explain it. And the killing was under such circumstances that he could have committed it. Avery insisted that he was miles away from the scene at the time of the crime, but he had not a single witness to corroborate him. The state, on the other hand, asserted as positively that Avery was present and that his alibi was wholly fictive. Like Avery, the state had no witnesses to prove his presence. Although the general public was convinced of Avery's guilt, the jury, hearing no affirmative proof of guilt, was constrained to bring in a verdict of acquittal.

* Edmund Pearson: *Murder at Smutty Nose.*

It is trite law not only that every fact adduced as circumstantial evidence must be affirmatively demonstrated and that the facts as a whole must be consistent with the defendant's guilt, but also that the circumstances pointing to his guilt *must be inconsistent with the guilt of anyone else.*

In *The Greene Murder Case,* therefore, Mr. Van Dine's thoughtfulness in allowing Ada to commit suicide saved the District Attorney considerable embarrassment. Ada could not possibly have been convicted on the irritating Mr. Vance's belief in her guilt. An acquittal would have been inevitable, much to the chagrin of the doughty sergeant and the harassed District Attorney, whose lawful functions, as a matter of common knowledge, really have nothing to do with detective work.

Perhaps the known facts in that case—which, as known facts, were surprisingly few—were consistent with Ada's guilt. She *might* have concocted all the improbabilities of which Vance accused her, but it is incredible that an American jury would have *believed* that she did. Further, all the known facts consistent with Ada's guilt point with equal logic to Sibella's guilt. Vance's theories are wholly *a priori.*

This by no means exhausts the detective stories in which evidence against the alleged murderer is entirely too sketchy and fantastic to gain a conviction outside the covers of a book. In a vast number of such fictions the authors seem more intent upon dramatic "surprise endings" than upon logical construction of legal evidence. And if the detective of fiction enjoys an altogether unnatural latitude in the matter of making arrests merely on his own theorizing, so is he allowed startlingly illegal *modi operandi.*

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The charming young assistant District Attorney in Earl Derr Biggers's tale, *Behind That Curtain,* uses a technique unavailable to officials in the flesh. When Grace Lane suddenly disappears and the police are at a loss, Miss Morrow casually observes, "Grace Lane was an old friend of Mrs. Tupper-Brock, which may mean that Grace Lane will write to her from wherever she is hiding. I am going to make immediate arrangements with the postal authorities. Mrs. Tupper-Brock's mail will reach her through my office from now on". Mr. Biggers naïvely permits the postal officials to enter into this impossible agreement! Even a mere man, Hercule Poirot, in Agatha Christie's *The Mystery of the Blue Train,* accomplishes much the same feat.

Every school boy should know that such a conception is totally absurd—not only as a matter of formal law, but even as an extra-legal practice. The prosecuting attorney of a populous county notorious for its crime, where social safety demands the use of every available weapon and where certain co-operative informalities of legal procedure might seem justifiable, has averred that such arrangements as Mr. Biggers and Miss Christie describe are absolutely unheard of. The only means by which the police can secure a piece of mail is by a warrant accurately describing the specific letter in question. It is inconceivable that the postal authorities would regularly deliver a suspect's mail to the prosecutor's office.

Another advantage accruing to fictive detectives and denied the actual police is the absence of restriction in securing evidence. This, however, does not necessarily redound to the discredit of the authors of such stories, since in many cases the heroes are amateur rather than official investigators. A legal limitation which in a score of American jurisdictions restricts the activity of detectives in government employ does not hamper those who are not so employed. Hence, if the investigator in the story is, like Sherlock Holmes, or Philo Vance, or Charlie Chan (acting unofficially and out of his jurisdiction) a mere private citizen, he may legitimately do much that would be futile as well as illegal if attempted by a government operative.

Because this limitation exists in some states and not in others, a detective story may be basically inaccurate if laid in one setting, while quite real if the action transpires in a different state, or in England, where police-detectives have much greater freedom in the methods by which they may obtain evidence. For instance, H. C. Bailey's short tale of *The Little House* would have been fantastic had the locale been Chicago or Detroit instead of London. It will be remembered that in this yarn a neighbor's denial that a kitten had entered her premises struck amateur detective, Reggie Fortune, as being so peculiar that he and a police officer disguised themselves as water inspectors and searched the neighbor's house. The criminal evidence they found during this visit could never have been introduced in most American courts, and there is some reason to believe that even in England this visit of the "inspectors" would have been held actually unlawful because "unreasonable". In any event, the eventualities would have proved disastrous to the state's case in the majority of jurisdictions in this country; when the defendants were formally charged, preceding the trial, their attorney would have moved the court for an order suppressing all evidence secured either through the visit of the pseudo-inspectors *or by means of any later activities under a search warrant.* And the order would have been granted.

The explanation is brief. Practically all of our constitutions declare that the persons, houses, papers and possessions of the people shall be secure against "unreasonable" search and seizure. The Supreme Court has said that search of a private house can never be reasonable unless made under the authority of a properly issued search warrant describ-

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ing the place to be searched and the thing sought, or in connection with an actual arrest therein. Moreover, an unreasonable search does not necessitate force; it may be made by stealth, or through deceit. On this theory of the courts, therefore, the visit of Fortune and the police officer was an unreasonable search. Granting the premise that it was unreasonable because made without a warrant, it was undeniably a search.

The judicial reasoning is that if a police officer can *use* evidence of crime secured by unreasonable search, he will make such searches in his zeal to secure convicting evidence. The courts fear that even risk of legal consequences to himself will not deter him; hence, they have removed the incentive to unreasonable searches by refusing to recognize evidence secured thereby. Long ago the Supreme Court laid down the dictum that to make effective the constitutional guarantee against unreasonable search, it was incumbent on the courts to prohibit society from utilizing any evidence so obtained. The state courts, in the beginning, were inclined to disagree; they followed the older precedent that although the searcher himself might be liable to punishment, nevertheless, the criminal could not gain by the searcher's over-zeal. But of recent years a certain fear of their own police has led many state courts to adopt the Federal rule. In these particular states, therefore, society could have availed nothing from what the "water inspectors" learned. And, as the later-secured search warrant was issued on the strength of this unreasonably secured information, it, too, was illegal and the search which it purported to authorize was also unreasonable.

Now, had Reggie Fortune gone alone on his visit of inspection, or had he taken with him another amateur as assistant, instead of an official police investigator, the evidence might have been used even in our own courts. The search, obviously, would not have been more reasonable, but the rule of exclusion applies only to evidence unreasonably secured by government agents. Fiction detectives who dispense with active official police co-operation are therefore an asset to the author in this respect. They remove, at least, a large part of the risk of writing bad law.

Likewise is an author fortunate in his freedom to elect where the crime shall be committed. Had Mr. A. E. W. Mason not set *The House of the Arrow* in France, detective Hanaud's foresight and effort would have proved quite futile. All his proof, one remembers, came from what he learned by secret and unauthorized search of the suspect's house. Had the law of his country necessitated his having a search warrant to make that evidence usable, it is more than probable that he would have found no evidence to be used, since, as it later developed, the private secretary to the *Commissaire* of Police was a member of the gang and was shrewd enough to have all incriminating evidence removed after Hanaud's request for a warrant. Hence, this entire story hinges upon the legality of the detective's unauthorized search; that the book is accurate is due to the fact that its locale is France, rather than America.

In *The Fellowship of the Frog,* Mr. Edgar Wallace, the author, allows the police to use a detectaphone for purposes of overhearing the conversation of persons under suspicion. Real policemen are not permitted facilitation of their objective by such means, in United States courts. The decision of the Supreme Court in the case of the notorious Olmstead conspiracy has laid the seal of official disapproval on such techniques.

The Olmstead organization was engaged in large-scale bootlegging. Olmstead, with a dozen or so associates, had put up a capital of twenty thousand dollars, and he and his colleagues were grossing over two million dollars annually. They operated a fleet of boats, including two sea-going vessels, had innumerable automobiles and trucks, owned an underground *cache* outside the city and

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various storage stations within the municipal limits, and employed a horde of scouts, salesmen, drivers, boatmen, clerks, telephone operators, bookkeepers and attorneys. The organization was as close an approach to the Fellowship of the Frog as reality is likely to come.

Efforts of the police to break up this ring consistently failed. An occasional minion of the trust was picked up now and then, assessed his small fine and allowed his freedom. But the big frogs remained elusive. In time, however, the police got wind of who the chiefs were. By means of tapping telephone wires, running from the headquarters of the gang to the homes of four of the leaders, the police were able to secure over seven hundred typewritten pages of memoranda recording incriminating conversations. It is to be noted that the officers did not trespass on the suspects' property in obtaining this information. The headquarters wires were tapped in the basement of the office building in which the organization was housed, and the connections with the private 'phones of the gang leaders were made from the street.

Olmstead and his fellow malefactors were indicted on the evidence secured through the wire-tapping and through subsequent searches made under warrants. The evidence obtained under the warrants, however, was suppressed on the ground that the warrants had not described with sufficient exactness the incriminating evidence which the police discovered. This left the state with nothing but the evidence secured through "listening in" on the telephone conversations.

The Olmstead attorneys then moved that this evidence be suppressed on the ground that it had been obtained by "unreasonable search". The trial court, however, denied this petition, and the Olmstead leaders were convicted. The case was, of course, appealed, and it finally came to the Supreme Court, where the significant question to be answered was concerned with the legality of this evidence.

Five of the justices agreed that its use was proper, four decided against it. The conviction stood affirmed. It is of interest, nevertheless, to note that the majority of the justices, in passing favorably on the question, did not so much as suggest that the police had acted "reasonably": they merely took the rather technical position that "listening in" without trespass on the suspects' property was not a "search" within the meaning of the Constitution. Some of the minority insisted that tapping wires and listening to criminals' or suspected criminals' private conversations is a violation of the law, is a search, and is—even under such circumstances as obtained in the Olmstead case—unreasonable. Some of the justices believed that whether or not there was a technical search in this case, the evidence should have been suppressed because the police had acted illegally. But all, apparently, would have agreed that, had the officers entered Olmstead's house and installed a detectaphone, as Inspector Elk did in fighting the Fellowship of the Frog, any incriminating evidence thus obtained could not have been used against the defendants.

It might be a happy facilitation of the police task in repressing crime if we could invest our real detectives with these privileges which detectives in fiction enjoy. But desirable privilege and power presuppose discretion, and real detectives are not endowed with discretion by mere alteration of the law. Perhaps Hanaud with his high ideals and delicacy of feeling could be entrusted with power; perhaps Poirot, and Philo Vance, complacent and irritating though he is, have the tact and intelligence essential to high privilege. But what of Sergeant Heath, of Gregson of Scotland Yard, and all the other dogged folk of detective fiction? What of the average police officer in real life?

In any event, when one considers the inequality of facilities between fiction and reality, it is not surprising that fiction is successful where reality frequently fails.

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# SCRAPPING THE ALPHABET

*by Janet Rankin Aiken*

Are you a "simplified speller"? I may as well admit at the outset that in this matter I am not on the side of the angels, whichever side that may be. I care little whether I write *through* or *thru, dressed* or *drest, catalog* or *catalogue.* Even actual misspelling, which outrages so many, offends me mildly, if at all. When a little boy I know writes *jest* for *just,* I see in the fact amusing evidence of a Maine ancestry; I do not take it as evidence of intellectual depravity.

Perhaps this confession will debar my words from all weight with the meticulous reader, with you who embrace enthusiastically the traditional or the altered orthography. And if the cause which I do incline to espouse, the prospect which seems to be in view for English spelling, offends you still more, I cannot help that. I merely propose to assemble for your view the signs and tokens of a spelling revolution far more drastic and subversive than the wildest dreams of the Simplified Spelling Board.

Certainly any schoolboy will agree that spelling needs a revolution and here, for once at least, the scholar will be found on the schoolboy's side. No one who has even a bowing acquaintance with the English language in its earlier stages can view our present-day spelling as anything other than a huge joke on somebody, probably on the schoolboy. There is simply no defense for *gullible* beside *tractable,* for *kerosene* beside *gasoline,* for *delight* beside *requite.* Recently a little girl lost a spelling prize of several hundred dollars by *luxurience.* But there is no good reason why *luxuriance* should not be *luxurience,* when you consider *sequence, sapience* and a dozen others.

One cannot even claim for our spelling that it preserves the derivations of words. Who could guess that *merry, dizzy, busy* all had a like spelling in Early English, having been *myrig, dysig, bysig,* respectively? No, we shall have to admit that the more one knows historically about English spelling, the more he will smile at the jokesmiths, Geoff Chaucer, Bill Caxton, Will Shakespeare, Sam Johnson, among others, who have made it what it is today.

And the trouble goes much deeper than spelling. What can one say of an alphabet which does those things it should not do, and leaves undone those things it should do, save that there is no help for it? How can we hope to spell phonetically our sixteen or more English vowel sounds with our five vowel symbols? How can we differentiate between the initial sounds of *that* and *thin* when neither has alphabetic representation? And on the other hand, how are we to choose among the dozens of spelling methods of representing the vowel of *cake,* or the middle consonant of *nation?* Clearly there is something radically wrong with the English alphabet itself.

Probably the first linguist who not only understood clearly the deficiencies of the Eng-



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lish alphabet, but who attempted to do something about it, was A. J. Ellis, an Englishman who flourished somewhat less than a century since. Ellis wrote a monumental book which he called *Principles of English Pronunciation,* and in it he presented to the world his idea of a scientific alphabet, which was to be one which would not only differentiate each sound from every other, but which would indicate also the facts of the sound's placing or formation in the mouth. By lines, curves and crossbars, Ellis ingeniously showed tongue height, tongue tensity and other interesting phonological facts, until at last he had a complete and scientific system of sound representation.

But the trouble with Ellis's alphabet was that it was too perfect, too far removed from the alphabet with which we daily struggle. Even scholars, for the most part, refused to learn all the little pothooks which revealed so much. Today this scientific alphabet is dead.

Half a century after Ellis there arose a scholarly group which dubbed itself the International Phonetic Association, a group composed of linguists of England, France, Germany and other countries. The aim was that of research and erudite discussion; there was not the slightest revolutionary purpose or intent. To be sure, these linguists were well aware of the shortcomings of the English alphabet, but then, what student was not?

Purely to facilitate its aim of scholarly research into the facts of language, the International Phonetic Association set about formulating a scientific alphabet which should be usable for English, French, German and, theoretically, for any language. Wiser than Ellis, these men compromised with the existing system, keeping so far as possible the letters now used in writing their languages, amplifying or altering only where necessary for scientific accuracy.

The International Phonetic Association alphabet was a great success among scholars. Soon the Dane, Otto Jespersen, the Englishman, Daniel Jones, the American, George Philip Krapp, with many others, were merrily using it to transcribe and compare pronunciations. The new tool was valuable in teaching a foreign language, in comparing dialects, in expressing historical facts of language, in multitudinous uses. Books in this field issued after 1915 were almost sure to have one or two transcriptions in the new alphabet, or at least to have references to it. Daniel Jones, in addition to printing lengthy transcriptions in his books on phonetics, actually compiled (in collaboration) a dictionary which grouped English words in the phonetic sequence of the new alphabet's forty characters, and which spelled and defined the words phonetically. This phonetic alphabet of the English language found a ready market.

So far all was peace and progress. No one dreamed of any menace in this innocent scientific alphabet. No one, that is, until Cassandra, in the person of Robert Bridges, Poet Laureate of England, chanced to stumble upon one of Mr. Daniel Jones's phonetic books. Mr. Bridges read the new alphabet and was aghast! The foe, then, was at the door! Our beautiful, cultured, traditional English spelling, and even the good old English letters themselves, were to go out in red ruin, replaced by this interloping monstrosity! Keats's exquisite line, "Silent upon a peak in Darien", for example, would look like this

saɪlənt ʌpən ə pi:k ɪn du:rɪən.

Fortunately Mr. Bridges found words adequate to the occasion. He expressed his feelings.

In vain did Mr. Jones disavow any revolutionary intent. Mr. Bridges had seen the writing in the stars. He knew, far better than the International Phonetic Association, that their alphabets were destined to supersede all that he knew and loved in English orthography. His despair was expressed in a little book called *Tract on the Present State of English Pronunciation,* in which, oddly enough, he seeks to base his objection to the new al-

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phabet on the pronunciation rather than on the spelling which it implies. But object to the new alphabet he does, and violently.

When I first read this little Tract, I was inclined to reply with Mr. Jones that Mr. Bridges was seeing things which weren't there, and that the International Phonetic Association was not, as he claimed, a revolutionary body. But shortly afterward it became increasingly apparent that Mr. Bridges might be right after all. There fell into my hands what the jacket calls "a unique piece of scholarship. Foreign students and all teachers of spoken English will find the book of the utmost value".

The title of the book is *A Grammar of Spoken English* and in small type below it are the revealing words, "On a Strictly Phonetic Basis". The author is, moreover, Adviser to the Japanese Department of Education and, as the publishers have issued at least three of his books previously, there must be a demand for them. Few publishers will distribute four successive brain children at a loss.

In *A Grammar of Spoken English,* the alphabet of the International reigns supreme. All the examples (and the book is mostly examples) are written in this character. While it is by no means a beginner's book, still the *Western Mail* has called it "clear and very helpful", and it is scarcely to be doubted that several thousand young minds will through it be given the chance to perceive the advantages of a really scientific orthography, easy to learn and accurate in the using.

Such books may well multiply. They may penetrate to the elementary student. Authors may get to writing the body of their work, as well as the phonetic examples, in the new style. . . . And then what? What of our English spelling, our English alphabet?

Can it be that we are actually at the inception of the linguistic revolution that Mr. Bridges prophesies? Shall we, on opening Shakespeare's Sonnets in 1950, find this line (in Southern British pronunciation)

wɛn tu ðə sɛʃnz ʌv suit sailnt þət?

Shall we quote Milton

kʌm nd trip ıt æz ju gou,

and even address the Deity,

auə faðə wıtʃ at ın hɛvn?

Mr. Bridges fears just that, but Mr. Jones reassures him. I do not know—I merely ask.

Certainly the old orthography will not be given up without a struggle. If Mr. Bridges is right, the present secret undermining of the bulwarks of our spelling must become apparent soon to the champions of tradition, and the opposing forces must become intrenched for battle. Thus far the transparent virtues of the new alphabet have been protected by the ignorance of its existence on the part of its potential foes. But this ignorance cannot long continue. Others, like Mr. Bridges, will read Daniel Jones or *A Grammar of Spoken English,* and then the conflict will be on.

One grain, possibly a whole lump, of comfort may be given the traditionalists. Just think for a moment of all the worn-out textbooks, the stupid treatises, the vicious novels, which will gently be permitted to disappear by the simple device of not reprinting them in the new type! As the ramifications of this thought unfold, I become almost ready to advocate a Constitutional Amendment making mandatory a new alphabet at least once every fifty years!

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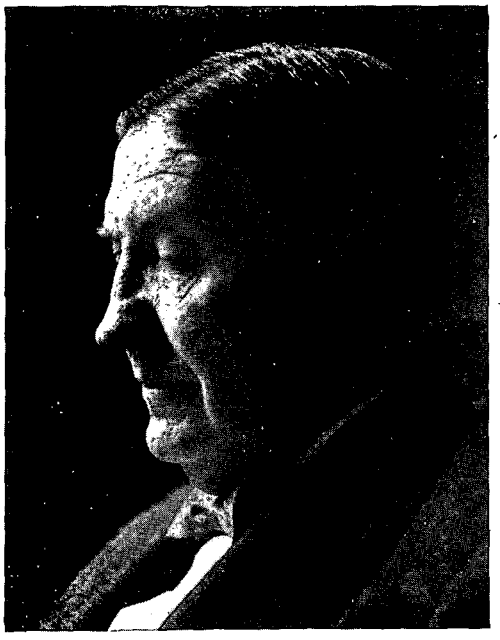
# THE LITERATI UNDER THE LENS

*by Robert H. Davis*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

THE portraits reproduced in this section of THE BOOKMAN are of individuals fairly well established in the profession of critical and fictional literature. All of them, thanks to the progress of this pictorial age, have become familiar to the public. Through the medium of the camera, the caricaturist and the painter—each operating independent of the others—these personalities have become standardized, in many instances, bereft of their individuality.

With the sole purpose of retaining those characteristics which are accountable for the trend of their minds, and in the hope that through photography, unretouched and devoid of artificial light and mechanical trickery, it would be possible to present these men as they really are, I made with a camera, on plates 3¼ by 4¼ inches, all of the portraits in the pages that follow. In those instances where the subject brought two moods to the sitting I made two negatives, the object being to reveal that remarkable dual personality which so frequently manifests itself in creative effort and achievement.



A SELF-PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT H. DAVIS

*Who, for* THE BOOKMAN, *records with his camera twenty portraits of American and British authors, and reviews with his pen the characteristics that account for their work.*

These pictures, instead of being the results of special preparation or appointments, are nothing more or less than interruptions in conversation, the incident of a casual meeting rather than the cause of it. In my editorial contacts these men crossed my threshold, sat down, chatted the while and left their features as souvenirs. When they cease calling, or if I tire of making pictures, the collection, already numbering nearly three hundred, will be presented to some free library into which posterity may wander, there to inspect the lineaments of the creative gentry of my age and generation.

Photographs copyright 1929 by Robert H. Davis.



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HENRY L. MENCKEN

Grub Street's George A. Custer, who rides alone on his charger, *Mercury,* to the basin of the Little Big Horn. The eyes of this militant paleface lack nothing of defiance though the whoop of his enemies resounds across the pra-i-ree and ten thousand tomahawks flash in the bright sunshine. Who is the "Sitting Bull" to take the scalp of "Yellow Hair"?

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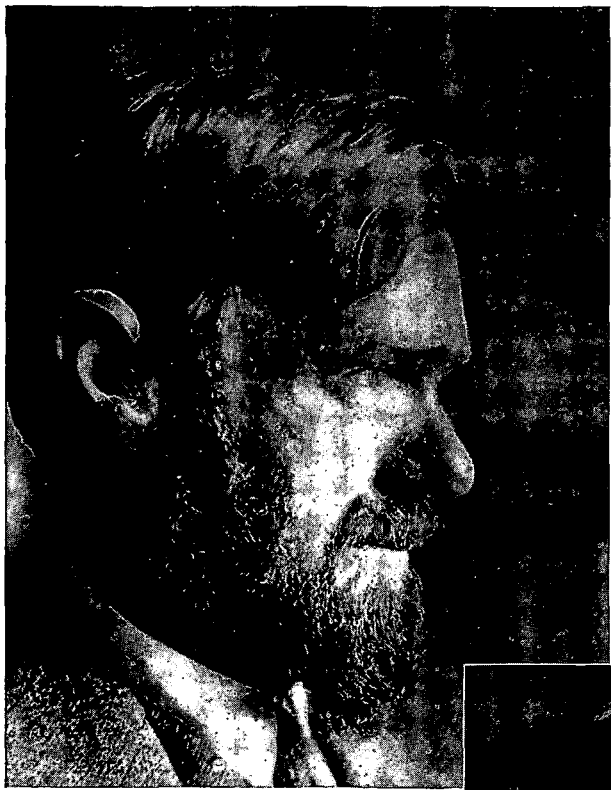
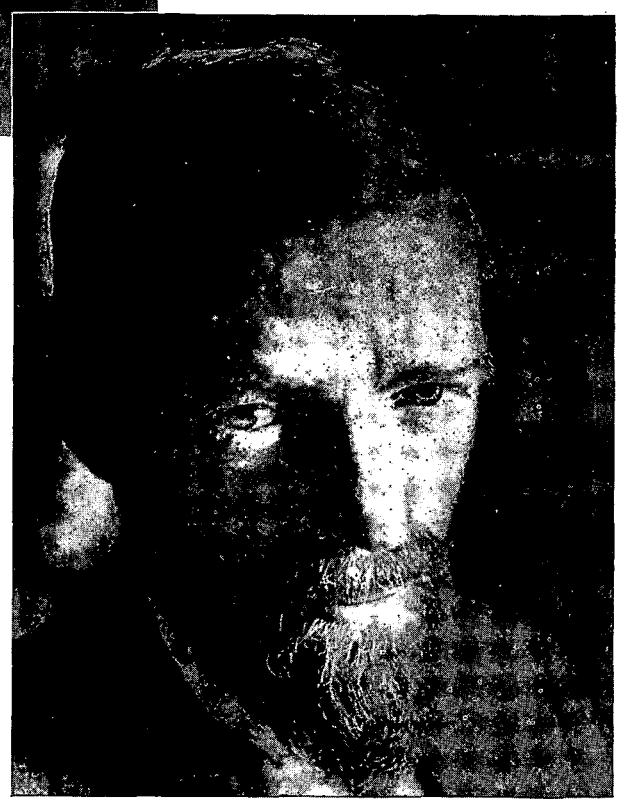


D. H. LAWRENCE



No great analytical powers are required to separate in these two portraits—taken in Florence, Italy, May, 1928—the fastidious and sensitive Lawrence who all but exiled himself from admirers by whom he was constantly sought, and the daring author of *The White Peacock, Sons and Lovers* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. How fearlessly he looks out upon his critics!

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FRANKLIN ADAMS (*F. P. A.*)

If there is any fault to find he will find it. His eyes are on the shore line of other people's hopes. He prefers the recent Mr. Horace to the present poets, and swings a rhythmic, wicked pen at the foibles of the day. Unlike the inflexible Samuel Pepys whom he esteems highly, *F.P.A.* tells the truth about everybody but himself.

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EDWIN LEFEVRE

Equipped with a genius for speculation—plus the brains not to pursue it. Reared in Wall Street, trained to finance, comprehending the weaknesses of money-makers, he wrote with one hand *The Golden Flood* and with the other *Simonetta,* a story of art—between chapters flooding the S. E. P. with inside stuff. Master of electrifying dialogue.

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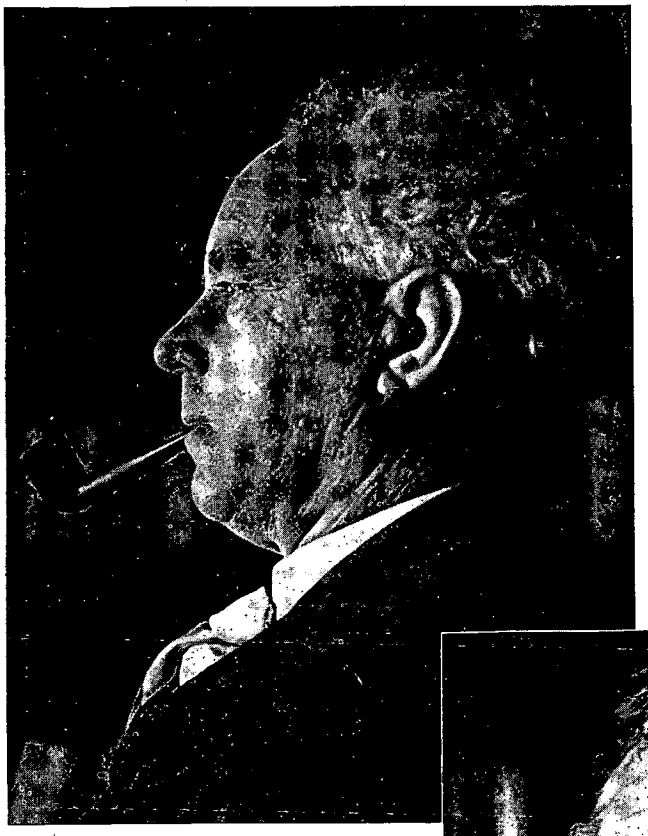
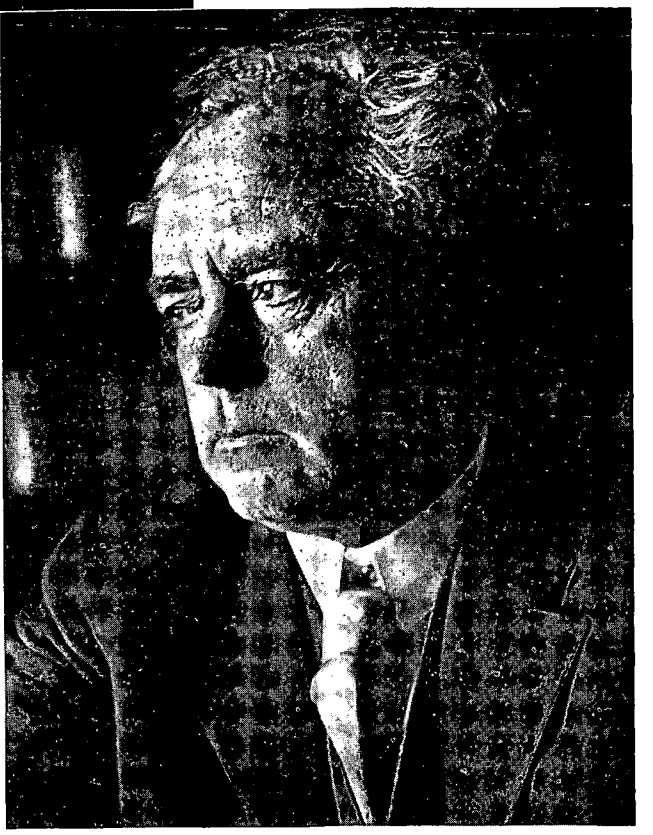


CHARLES J. FINGER



The scoundrel with the pipe writes such books as *Highwaymen, In Lawless Lands* and *Romantic Rascals,* whereas the saint on the right, with *Tales from Silver Lands,* won the Newberry medal offered for juvenile literature. Finger is an accomplished pianist, an authority on Grieg, Chopin and Wagner; and to counterbalance that he sings sailor chanties with amazing gusto.

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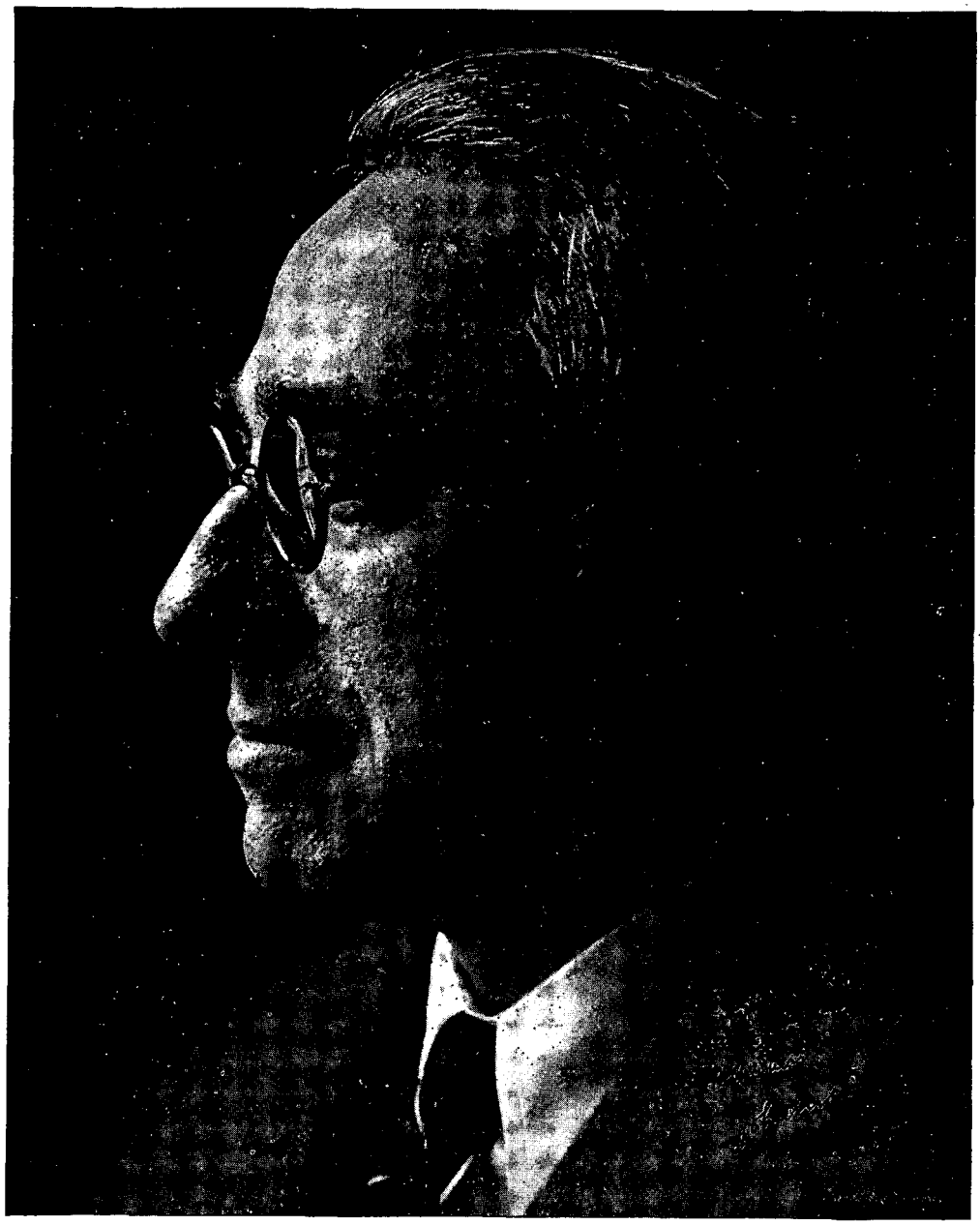

JOHN ERSKINE

One negative was enough. A noble profile gilded with mirth. Here is imagination, intellect and vision. Behind him lie a dozen professorships, the conquest of Helen of Troy, the dope on Sir Galahad, and ever before him re-election to the Presidency of the Authors' Club. This portrait reveals all the qualities possessed by the biographer of *Adam and Eve*.

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MONTAGUE GLASS

Born in Manchester, England. The creator of Messrs. Potash and Perlmutter (both Americans), interpreter of Yiddish types and the author of business dramas, y'understand, appears above. On the right is Professor Glass, who, with rare virtuosity, can play from memory all of the well-known Italian, French and German operas, compose music and deliver a learned lecture on the Gregorian chant.

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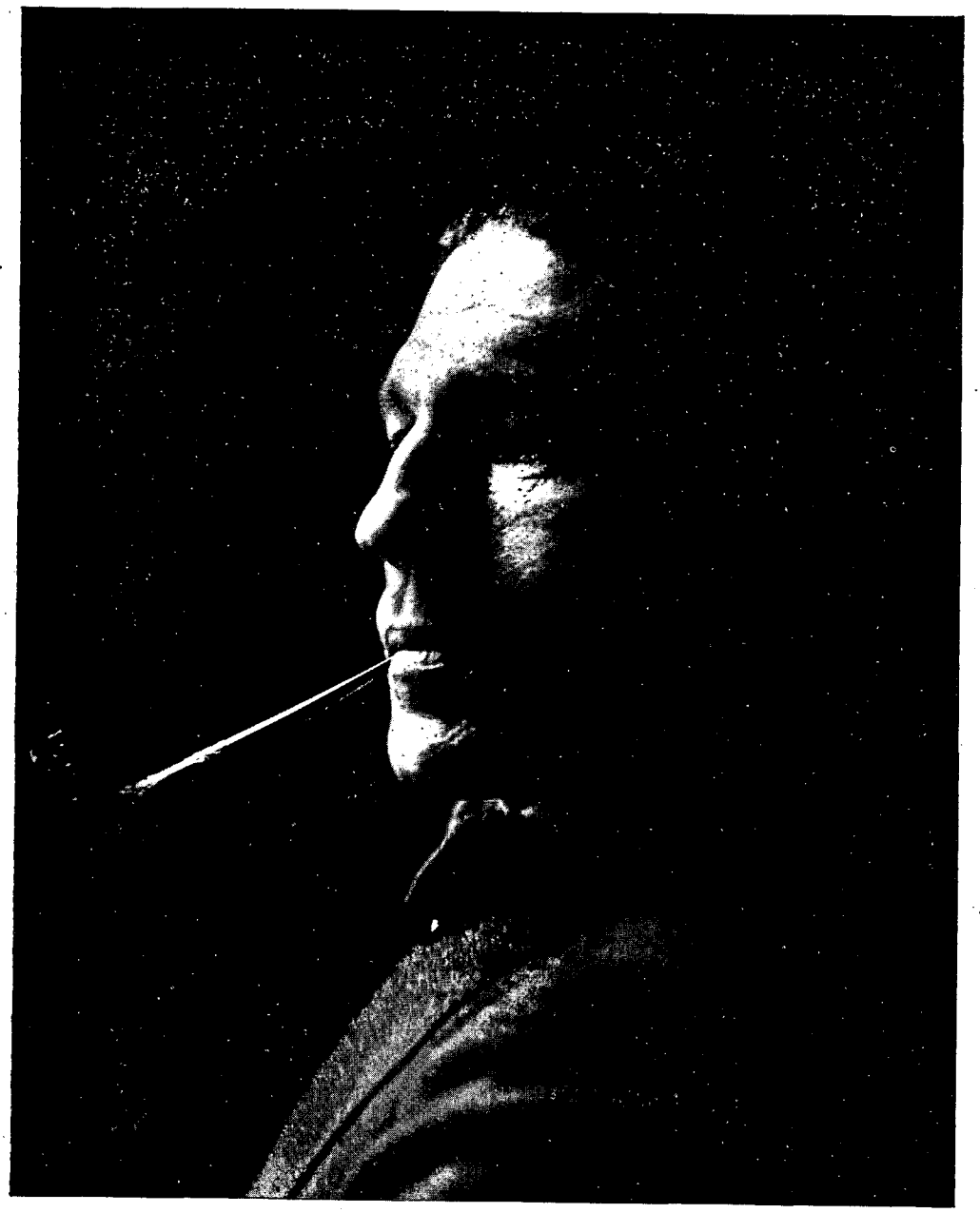

ARTHUR HAMILTON GIBBS

Born in England; brother to Sir Philip and all the other Gibbses, and husband of Janet Gibbs. Became a naturalized American; looks like a Mohawk Indian; can put up his dukes with any man his weight; plays golf in the eighties. Came back from the front with the manuscript of *Gunfodder* in his knapsack. Wrote *Soundings,* best seller.

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WALTER WINCHELL

This cherubic youngster, wide-eyed and immaculate, stepped off a suburban trolley car somewhere on the outskirts of Harlem, walked down to 42nd Street and kicked up more dust than a stampede of buffaloes. He created a new slang for Broadway, scooped Park Row every day, made "whoopee" a household word and put brilliant cracks in the *Daily Mirror*.

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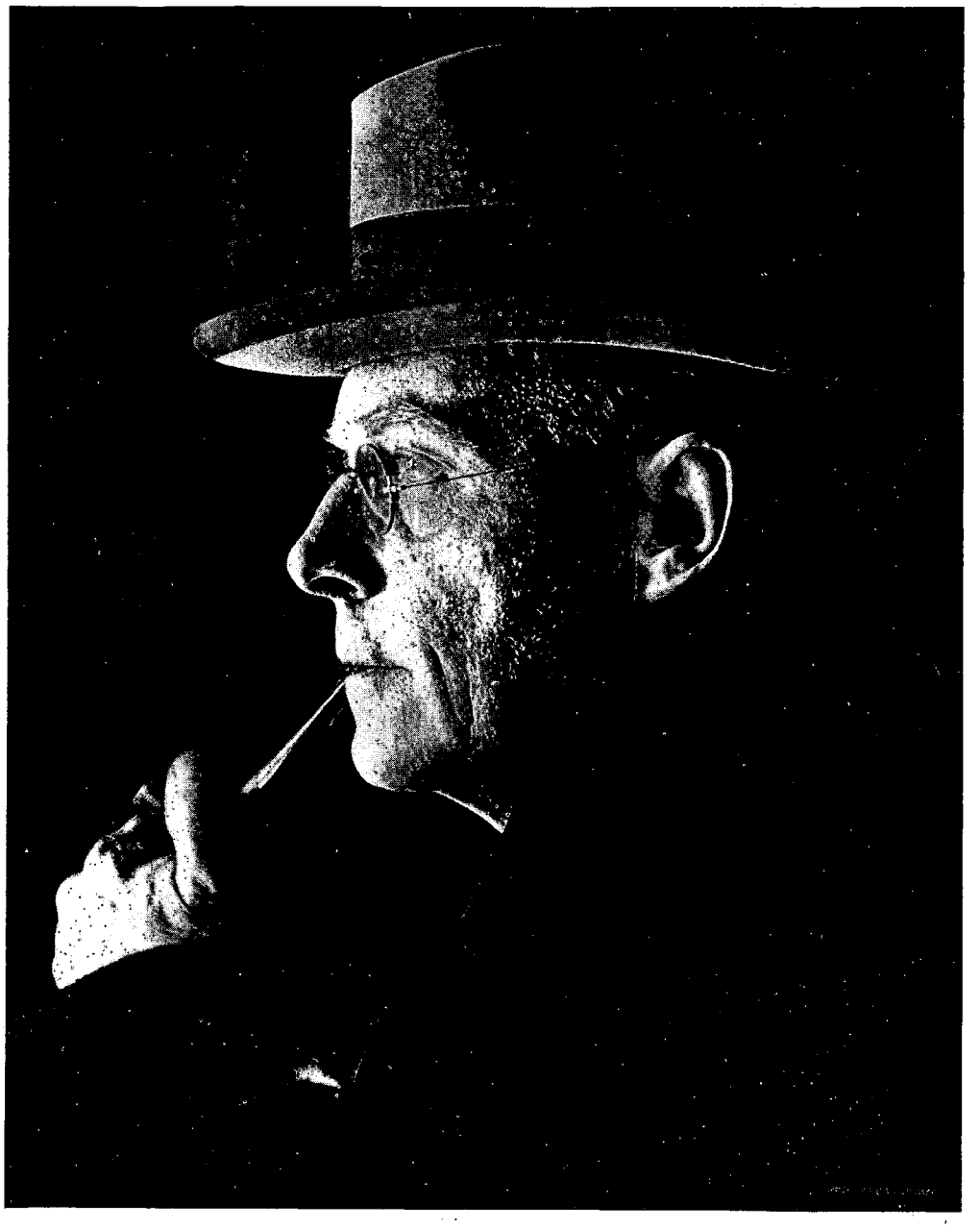

FRANK L. PACKARD

In his novel, *The Miracle Man,* he supplied all the ingredients upon which the movies have since fattened. Educated at McGill University. He turned to literature and created Jimmie Dale, the cracksman, and other underworld characters. Despite his penetrating eye, Mr. Packard is a come-on for con men and thinks counterfeit money is legal tender.

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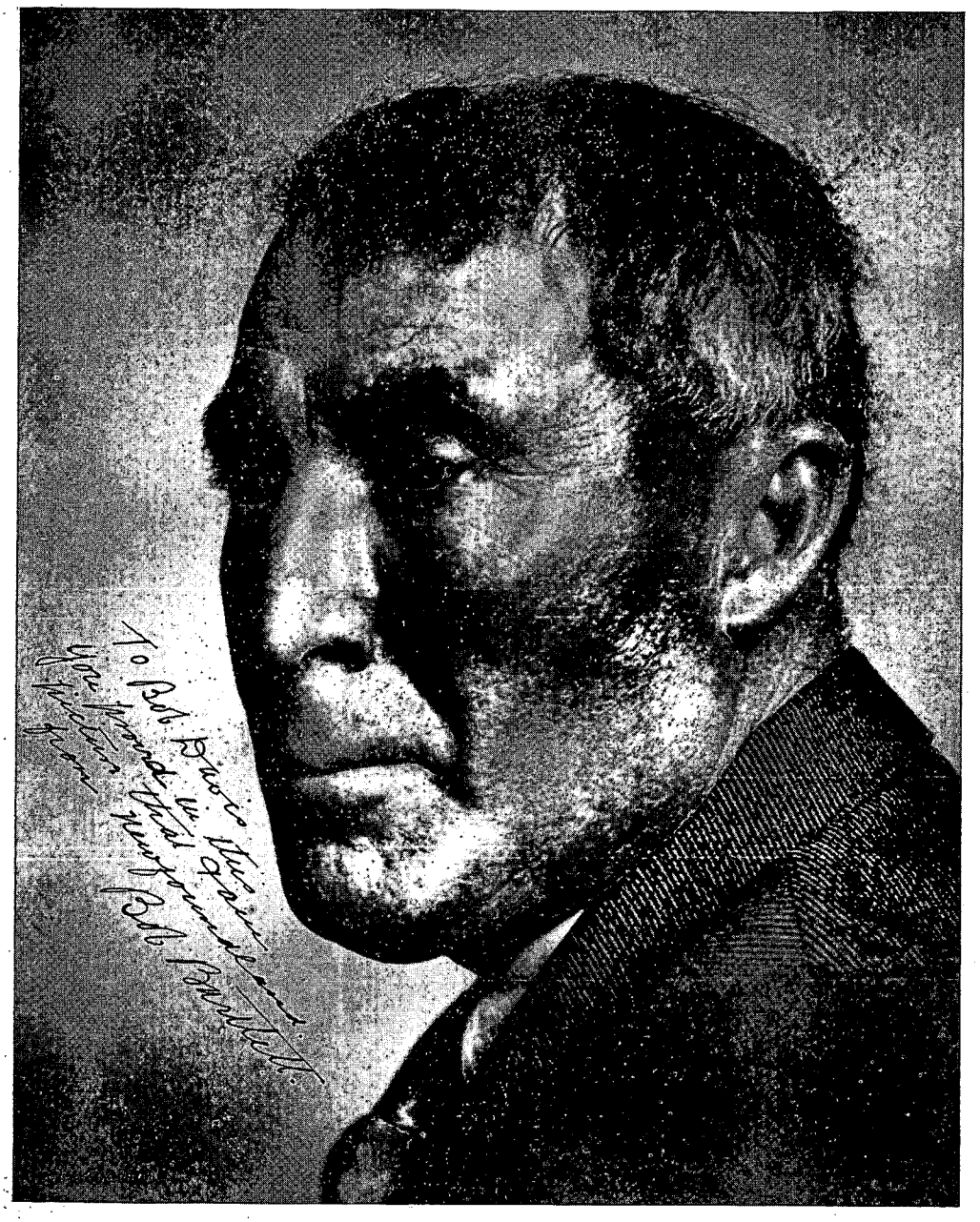


CAPTAIN BOB BARTLETT

Master of the *Roosevelt* that took Peary to the Pole. Adventure, wreck and famine have been his. In this picture he resembles some amphibian that had come up from the sea off the coast of Newfoundland, where he was born. His book, *The Log of Bob Bartlett,* is an autobiography written below zero.

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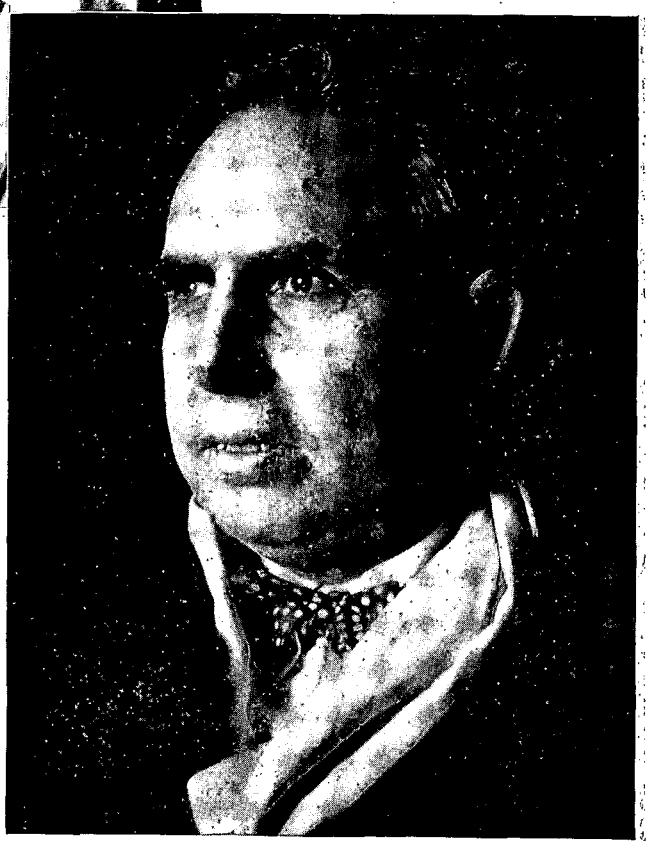
THEODORE DREISER



Two personalities as far apart as the poles. Observe the meekness of the author of *Sister Carrie, A Traveller at Forty* and *Twelve Men*. Look now upon the assurance of the man on the right who wrote *The Titan, The Genius* and *This Madness*. It is the duty of posterity to decide which of these widely different personalities shall survive in the admiration of the public.

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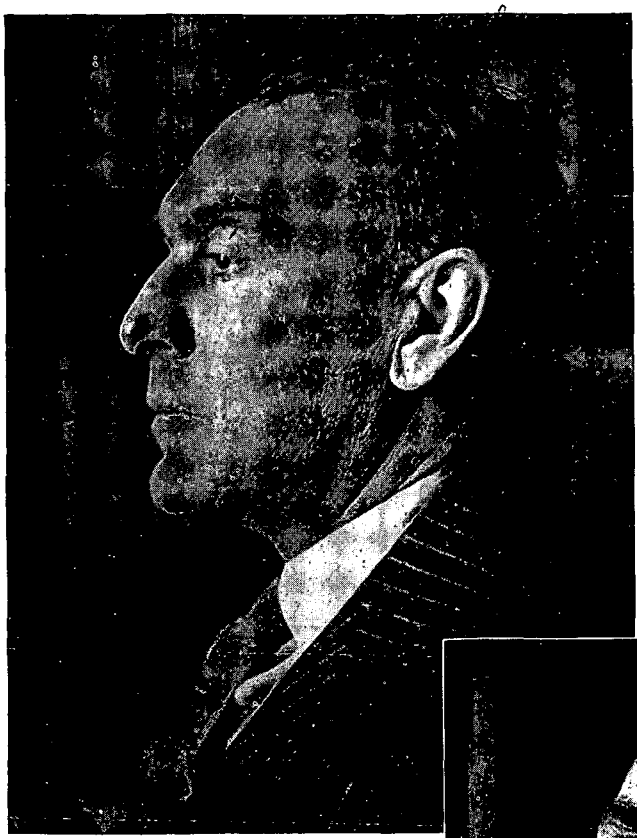
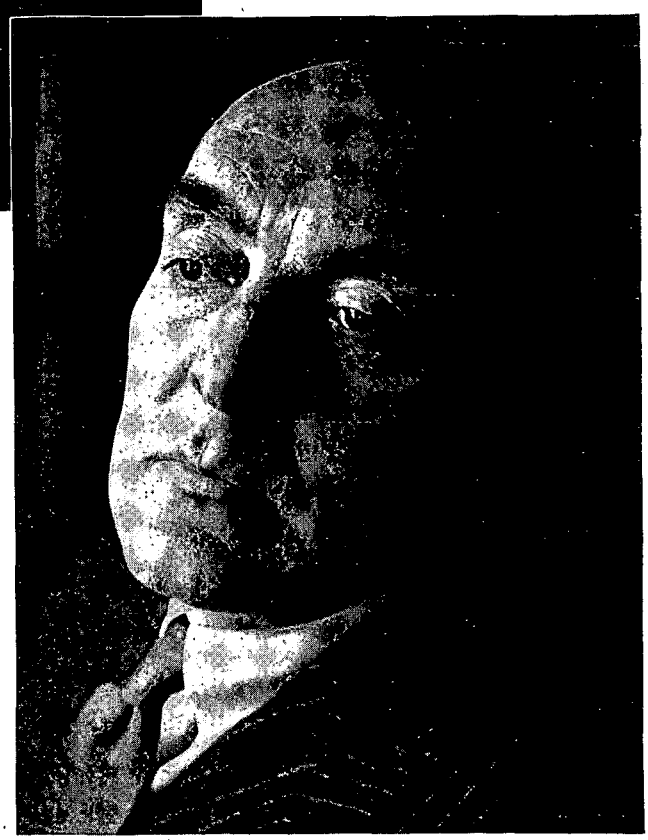


RING LARDNER



A singularly taciturn, wise man. On the right is the author of *The Champion,* grimmest of his tales. Above we have the flexible Lardner who opens his conversation with silence and closes it with a bang. *You Know Me Al* is merely a title. There are two entirely separate Lardners, neither one of which has had the pleasure of meeting the other.

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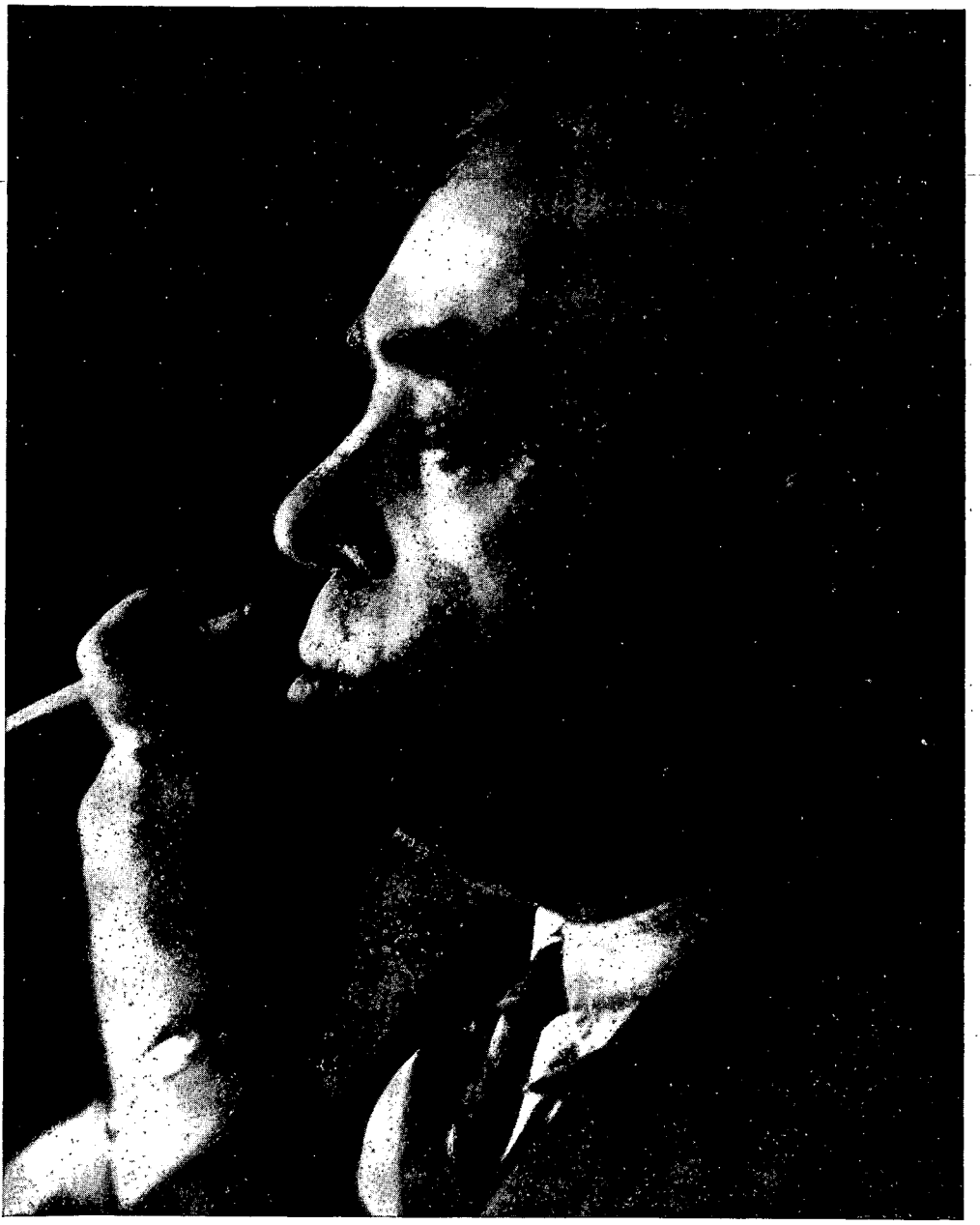

IRVIN S. COBB

This man only, who has the forehead and eyes of a mystic, could have written *The Belled Buzzard, Up a Side Street* and his essay on his nearness to death. This man only, with his cigar and his wrist watch, could have written *Speaking of Operations* and other side-busters. All of Mr. Cobb is revealed in this portrait.

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HARRY HANSEN

A literary Viking who beat the World War to the Belgian border by two days. Wears a dreamy eye, but a firm mouth, and has scuttled many a ship in the Publishers' Grand Canal; a lighthouse to some, a sunken reef to others. The cry of a drowning author means nothing in particular to "The First Reader" of the New York *World* book review pages.

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# TWO POEMS

*by Frances M. Frost*

## REMNANTS OF GREEN

After bird-passage and the windy going
Of each barbaric leaf,
There is a sudden sternness on the mountain,
There is a sudden harsh and flinty grief.

After the vanished wing, the vivid blowing,
Color of hemlock cries
Alone along high ridges, giving solace
To gaunt-ribbed pastures where the dead year lies.

## OF A CERTAIN POET

Say that his roots were in the soil, his heart
Nourished on sand and granite, given drink
From springs run underground. Or mention only
That he was one inclined to dream and think
About the things he saw. He loved the land:
Stagger of fences and the march of walls,
Tree-boles, and hills without a farmhouse-light,
And brooks with thicket-hidden waterfalls—
These were a racy quiet in his speech,
These were a pungent beauty on his tongue.
Words from him had a whimsical persistence,
As if they'd been wind-bent when they were young.

Something is gone from field and mountain-rim,
Now that the earth has taken all of him.



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# A LONDON LETTER

REFLECTIONS ON A DAY IN THE HEART OF ENGLAND, A NIGHT ON MR. SELFRIDGE'S ROOF, AND THE GENERAL ELECTION

*by Rebecca West*

*June, 1929*

"And where," said I, "shall we lunch?" For we had motored out to fetch a friend whose work forced him to spend the summer in a dead and alive town in the greenest vacuity of rural England, eighty miles or so north of London; and the answer to the question was by no means obvious. "Let us go to Boddington," said my friend. "Don't you remember? It's the place we went through three weeks ago on the Oxford road, with the figures of a king and queen on the church tower." "The fact that a place has a church tower with the figures of a king and queen on it is no guarantee it will provide a decent lunch," objected the Third. "Quite so, but if we do not get a decent lunch," said the Second, "we can console ourselves by going and looking at the figures of a king and queen on the church tower. Whereas there are ever so many places where (this being England) we will get as bad a lunch as can be imagined, and there is no church tower with the figures of a king and queen on it to look at afterwards." "Bless you, my lad," said the Third—for the Second is still in his teens—"you have begun to learn how to live."

Thus, steering by the twin lights of hope and despair, we started forth to make our way through by lanes from the main road we were on to the Oxford Road; and enquired for Boddington at village stores that sold peppermint balls in jars marked "Curiously Strong" and pink drill corsets under thatched eaves; and from dairymaids on whose cheeks the glow of health was so vivid and concentrated that in a London night-club it would have passed for the most perverse and insolent make-up.

Oh, my astonishing country! Nowhere could we find a soul who had ever heard of Boddington. Yet when we found it, much later in the day, it proved to be not fifteen miles away. But let no one leap to the conclusion that this was an effect of the vacancy of the rural mind. Far from it. The truth is that in England the rural mind is weighed down by a superfluity of geographical names. Every field and every spinney has its proper and by now arbitrary name. The field that the stranger will know as the one with the three ash trees standing up on the knoll is known to the villager as Parker's Field, and its neighbor with the bramble thicket by the pond is Barron's Field; and who Parker and Barron were, not a being out of the churchyard can tell.

It is possible that the minds of the storekeeper and the dairymaid were as crowded



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with as great a quantity of geographical detail, albeit it referred to a confined area, as the rest of us had collected during fairly extensive travels in Europe and America. And the practical consequences of their way of doing it did not irritate us at all, for outside the village store was a round pond by which three laburnum trees let down their golden hair; and the dairymaid stood at the gateway of an avenue where pink and white chestnut trees set to partners for two or three hundred yards. I cannot deny that to live in my native land is for the most part like spending one's life under a shower. But there is usually about a week in May when England beats the world for beflowered and verdant prettiness; and this was it.

* * *

Moreover, we lunched long before we got to Boddington. The pangs of greed overcame us. It is disconcerting for those of us with a desire to have the universe show itself obedient to neat Kantian principle to see how often gratification of our baser emotions brings on us the most exquisite and even ennobling experiences, and *vice versa*. I remember years ago a lady who was doing settlement work in the East End of London telling me how difficult she found it to deal with the Jews; they had such queer ideas; and on enquiry I found she had recently been confounded by a Jewish factory girl who, after having been given a course in English history, announced that the most definite lesson she had learned from her studies was that Charles I never would have had his head cut off if he had restricted himself to the same pursuits as Charles II. Even so, I reflected bitterly that no virtuous and self-sacrificing action of my life has ever brought me an hour so delightful as that which I owe to the weak and gluttonous desire to get hold of some cold mutton as soon as possible which turned me into the (let us say) Smithers Arms: that dull, though trim little inn in the village about which there was really nothing at all distinguished except, perhaps, the uniform apricot tree that was trained up the front of nearly every house. My delight, as those will readily guess who have eaten at wayside inns in England, had nothing to do with the lunch, which was (as I had anticipated) cold mutton that was very sheerly sheep, and a cucumber and some tomatoes in a glass dish, and gooseberry tart, and a crusty loaf, and sweet butter. "The kind of lunch that Wordsworth would have liked," said the Third severely to the Second, who was grumbling. "Yes, but that's why one doesn't like Wordsworth," responded the Second. The good time began after lunch when the landlord, a quiet man, came in and told us that he had permission to take his guests over the grounds of—yes, I must go on using the name Smithers, for plainly I must not direct anybody to this spot; and, indeed, it was a simple, downright English name much like that—Smithers Hall. Without excitement, for we have been about a bit, we accepted his offer. He took up his cloth cap off an oak chest in the hall; we stepped out in the sunlight on the dusty road. A pink-eyed mongrel whose appearance made a confused assertion that there was a pack of fox-hounds in the neighborhood, slunk at our heels. "Ah, get along with you!" said the landlord, "I don't want you with me now." Finally he had to bend and threaten to throw a stone before the highly irregular tail would wag away in the right direction.

* * *

There was a gateway opening into a circular drive that ran round a very ordinary shrubbery. From the road we could see nothing but the shrubbery. When one got inside one saw that the drive led to a solid, sensible, not very large Jacobean house, to which there had been added on each side a wing done in the Adam style by somebody much less able than the Adam brothers. In the middle of the wall of each of these stories, inset a little above the ground, was a large black

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stone, bearing an inscription. Idly, for we were still not very much interested, we strolled up to look at them. In florid, peruqued letters the inscription began: *Ludovici Jussu* . . . Ludovicus? Ludovicus who? "A Mr. Smithers brought those 'ome with him," said the landlord. "Not *this* Mr. Smithers. Ah, get along with you!" The pink-eyed mongrel had made a reappearance, and had to be threatened into flight again. By this time we had read the inscription; also an explanatory line that had been painted above it at a later date. "Oh, I like Mr. Smithers," said the Second. For Ludovicus was an important Ludovicus; he had, as it were, specialized in "Jussus". He was Louis XV and he had laid these as foundation stones in the pier he had built at Cherbourg; and in 1758 Mr. Smithers, being an Admiral of the British Fleet, had been sent to take Cherbourg and destroy the pier, and had not been unmindful of his back garden in Buckingham when he did so. Next time your liner waits outside Cherbourg and you see the breakers dashing on the mole, think how home-loving Mr. Smithers waited out there in his time; and how he reacted to *"Ludovici Jussu."* "The Smithers family 'ave been about a lot, they have," said the landlord, and led us round the end of the house onto the terrace.

* * *

The house stood on the side of a broad and shallow valley, the existence of which could not be suspected from the highroad. The whole valley, which must have been about three miles across, was a park. The grass was almost like a lawn; and in the shade of exquisitely disposed groves grazed herds of deer. "It seems a pity," said the landlord, with what none of us took as irrelevance, "that there's only one Mr. Smithers left; the young one that's at Oxford. All his four brothers were killed in the war." We turned and looked at the house; and looked straight into a library that was as it was when it had been first furnished, and the wing newbuilt. Oh, the beautiful pale shades of the seas and continents that float on the globes which have been in gentlemen's libraries for a century or two! And the cunningly carved lions' heads that glower at one from the wooden frames that case those globes! Peonies, in a Chien Lung vase spiralled with dragons, dropped red petals on a walnut bureau whose proportions were so perfect that one could hardly believe the original maker had been responsible for them (since he must have been a mortal man) and felt that time itself must have applied the last shaping. The shadows of the room were finely fluted with innumerable old books.

"There was a Mr. Smithers who was quite a scholar," said the landlord. "I've heard tell that there was an author called Gibbon used to come and stay here. Would you pass along and look at the hall? Mr. Smithers wouldn't mind —— Anybody I bring in here he'll trust to look round." We looked through the window to an Italian armoire of ebony and inlaid ivory that drew on each drawer a picture of some strange beast; an early oak chest, as early as I have ever seen outside of Knole; a chair or two, of the kind that Chippendale made and sent to China to be lacquered; and on the wall at the back one of those cups of sweet-chocolate-and-whipped-cream that Murillo chose to call by the name of Assumptions of the Virgin. "A Mr. Smithers," said the landlord, "was an Ambassador in Madrid once, long ago. Oh! go 'way, you!" For the pink-eyed mongrel was with us again.

* * *

We walked through rose-gardens, and a man of seventy-five smiled with clear eyes at us. "His people," said the landlord, "have always worked for Mr. Smithers." We went down through woods where bluebells lay in pools like water, to an avenue of stupendously stout and twisted yew trees. The yew tree is the sacred British tree, and if one finds an ancient growth of them it is nearly sure to mark a place that has had significance for the

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imagination of past peoples. This was a niche on the hills that may have been an impressive viewpoint over desolation when the country was undrained and fenny. We came out on a summerhouse that some cheerful, sporting Mr. Smithers had made of mud and roofed with thatch and decorated with a pattern made of thousands and thousands of the bones of the hind legs of foxes; and there we sat for a while, looking down on the vast demesne of agricultural land, as neat as a new pin, that stretched westward from the park boundaries. "Eight miles the property stretches this way, and seven miles the other," said the landlord. "Ah, you pesky little varmint!" But he spoke lovingly to the pink-eyed mongrel, for really there was no sense in trying to pretend that this was a world which was not very kind to little dogs, and was too sleek in its well-being to insist peevishly on the conditions of breed that it theoretically exacts.

* * *

Then we went back along an avenue of beeches, each one of them a king of trees; and passing by a vicarage which we were told was occupied by Mr. Smithers's uncle—"the living belongs to the family too, and it always goes to a younger son, so the squire's always been a Mr. Smithers, and the vicar's been a Mr. Smithers too"—we came on the church. Disconcertingly it exactly resembled, in everything but the tower, which was debased Perpendicular, Mr. Smithers's house. "You see," explained the landlord, "the church was burned down about 1760, so Mr. Smithers had it rebuilt to match his house." Was it the same Mr. Smithers who had brought the "Ludovici Jussu" stones? Yes, it was. Mr. Smithers, you were always good, but in that particular manifestation you were superb! Mr. Smithers, I adore you as passionately as is possible considering the intervention of time, the great chaperon.

Within the church, not so good. Mr. Smithers had apparently fallen a victim to the Evangelical Movement, which for some unknown reason swept the aristocracy as well as the lower classes at the end of the Eighteenth and the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. Every expression of the religious instinct that might be described as Papist had been banished, with the result that the church closely resembled a white-washed barn adorned with marble tablets on which black letters told forth laconically (since there are some things that can be taken for granted) the virtues of deceased Mr. Smitherses and their wives. The details of these consorts opened vistas into history the world over. One was the daughter of the fifteenth Earl of Spillikins. *Ay do ni!* The Spillikins have fallen on ill days. The present Earl of Spillikins (the nineteenth) is one of the leaders of the blue-blooded settlers of Kenya Colony which our nation pinched from the Germans during the Great War, and he spends his time voicing the claim of his kind that they shall be able to force native labor to work on their plantations: and the Colonial Office, being corrupted by democratic control at home, will do no such manly thing, but performs instead cantrips which turn the stomach of these gallant gentlemen—as, for instance, sending out anthropologists trained in the Jungian school to investigate native customs and beliefs.

But some, alas, belonged to systems that had not even such discouraging survivals in the modern world. One Mr. Smithers of the middle Eighteenth Century married a French duchess, and you know how that world ended. Another in the early Nineteenth Century married an Austrian baroness; whose kin are like as not teaching dancing at hotels in Carlsbad. "And the old lady, Mr. Smithers's mother," said the landlord, "was an Italian princess"; and he gave the name of a famous Italian family, of the sort whose effeteness has been utterly proved by the triumph of Mussolini. What delicious scenes must have been initiated in these international alliances! Consider the quietly dressed

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stranger coming to the gates of the gloomy palace, and (on production of unquestionable letters of introduction) being taken past scores of flunkies by the major-domo to the audience-chamber of the descendant of all the princes there have ever been. "Your Highness, I wish to propose myself for the hand of your daughter." "And who may you be?" "I, sir, am Mr. Smithers."

But there was souvenir of another kind of voyaging. On a tomb by the altar, that was evidently a relic of the old church, lay an alabaster Crusader. "Is that the tomb of the family that lived here before the Smithers?" I asked. The landlord looked surprised. "No family lived here before the Smithers," he said. "Didn't you notice what a funny name our village has?" I had. "It's the Anglo-Saxon name, and they say it has never been changed because the property has always been owned by the same family. When William the Conqueror came over there was a—" He paused. A faint smile appeared on his face. I sympathized with his dilemma. It did seem absurd to use the term about somebody who had lived nearly a thousand years ago, but what are you to do? He said it boldly: ". . . There was a Mr. Smithers living just where the new house is today. . . ."

* * *

Driving home we said, "How curious it is that we are on the eve of a General Election! There is not the least sign of interest in one single town or village we have passed through." A jackass rubbed its long ears against a barn door with no alteration in its manner (which was that of one who is trying to remember the exact quotation) because there was pasted from hinge to latch a poster printed in the True Blue of Conservatism; an ash tree raised its sticky black buds above a hedge and one was impressed by the extraordinary pompousness of its branches, which recalls the lightness and rigidity of the best wrought iron work, rather than by the poster on the gate beside, which announced that a Labour candidate was standing for a constituency while twenty-five years ago a workman suspected of Socialist sympathies would have been turned out of his cottage onto the streets. We agreed sagely that people were so indifferent because they all knew perfectly well what was going to happen. "No change at all," said cynical Second. "A slightly reduced Conservative majority," said cautious Third. "A substantially reduced majority," said I, but only for the reason (please do not laugh at me too loudly) that I cherished a belief that the Liberal Party was about to stage an impressive comeback. Mr. Lloyd George's unemployment scheme looked not so bad beside his Tory opponent's total lack of ideas. The emptiness of the Grand Canyon moved a humorist to acclaim it as the perfect place to dispose of one's old razor blades, but that was only because he had never looked into the mind of the English Conservative Party. Mr. Lloyd George's performance also looked well beside the Labour Party's doings, because it proceeded from conviction, whereas Mr. MacDonald and his friends have in their hearts lost all faith in their own formulas. With these trifling variations we all agreed what was going to happen and that we had never known a tamer and more prognosticable General Election; and we reverted to talk of the ineffable, the pervasive, the eternal Mr. Smithers.

* * *

The calm persisted even on Election Day. I voted on my way to the Opera, and thought no more about it. In the entr'acte of "Don Giovanni", when we stood about in the Covent Garden foyer which is nearly as exquisite an island of the past in the present as the foyer of the Comédie Française, we talked of nothing but the extreme satisfaction of Elizabeth Schumann, who seems to launch the whole of herself at a note like something a little plumper than the arrow which has nevertheless the arrow's kind of winged

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flight; and the amazing Covent Garden tradition of accompanying all the recitations in "Don Giovanni" on the piano, which is as nasty a shock as the ear can have. We would all have gone to our beds without another thought of votes had it not been for a Party we had to look in at: an Election Party.

* * *

They took us up in the elevator, those little dears in the white boleros and Turkish trousers, fresh creatures clad in the uniforms of faded fancy. Some day, I thought, as we flashed past floor after floor of the great department store, where merchandise assumed the outlines of great statuary under dust-sheets, we will have a world-wide revolt of the usherettes. "Why did you dress us romantically," they will say, "when nothing romantic ever happens?" We stepped out of the elevator to the chaste halls where for six days out of the week the not too grand and not too gay sit and eat that eighth-part of a waffle that here is mockingly known as waffles, that tenth-part of a portion of ice cream that is ironically called an ice, and drink the tea which it is their birthright to like. Men in white clothes with coral necklaces hanging to their waists and musical instruments in leather cases hung about in perturbation. They were a Hawaiian band and had been engaged to play, but they could not find where they were to play, and in the search they had found five other bands performing. A slimness in white satin just like any other turned a face that bore that defiant determination to be conventional no matter what anybody says, which marks the rebellious royalty; it was Princess Ingrid of Sweden. Beyond, people danced on a floor that gleamed towards infinity. Lady Oxford, that curious totem pole, whirled among the dancers alone; it was perhaps the quickest way of getting across the floor. One went through a doorway and found men in green baize aprons doing the kind of carpentering thing to a huge turntable that people usually do in lean-to workshops at the bottom of the garden. Ultimately champion skaters danced on it. Incongruity was so definitely a quality of the evening that I should not have been surprised if it had been me and the Princess Ingrid and one of the lost Hawaiians who had had to dance on it.

In another doorway one passed a couple of sporting peers with rose-colored faces and that lost glaucous look in their eyes which denotes those who have given their human kingdom for a horse. Were their faces more rose-color than usual, did a concern for human interests flop about in their eyes like a fish out of water? In the room beyond were tables holding up innumerable champagne-bottles to the glory of the Lord and the wonder of man. At the first table sat a millionairess of pugilistic physique, who was talking of her first husband's character very much like an expert mountaineer describing a range of hills on the far horizon: "That peak there —you can just see it—I had a hard struggle to master that, but we did it with ropes and plenty of axe-work".

* * *

Her audience was Fania Marinoff, tiny and shapely and brilliant and exotically colored, like one of her own dazzling fingernails, and Carl van Vechten, who has been greatly beloved in England ever since he had a long illness in the Carlton Hotel and held levees dressed in vermilion brocade pyjamas on a bed covered with a jade Chinese shawl, the whole effect being reminiscent of a Tiepolo ceiling painting. Over Carl was bending our white-haired host, Mr. Selfridge, who has carried his passion for international relationship so far as becoming almost exactly like Mr. Lloyd George. In motherly accents he was enquiring, "Are you sure you've got enough to drink?" The light was reflected from hundreds of electric lights on to thousands of champagne bottles. (Though, by the way, not one soul was drunk.)

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One went back into the ballroom, where Noel Coward was. "But aren't there Election results being shown somewhere?" "There." He nodded his head towards a colonnade behind which one saw rows and rows of the flat black fiddle-shaped backs of well-groomed Englishmen, the floured backs rising out of printed chiffon of well-groomed Englishwomen. They were all turned one way, and they were held tense. As one looked they relaxed, a tremor ran through the rows, and there burst out a storm of boos. We had not time to tell each other that that must have been a Labour victory before we spun round on our heels, because through the windows behind us came the sound of a cheer from the people in the street below, that rushed up and licked the tall building like a flame. We went to the windows and leaned out into the night. The whole of Oxford Street in front of Selfridge's store and for some distance on each side, with the exception of the narrowest possible alley-way for automobiles, was packed with people whose families had always worked for Mr. Smithers. Their faces were upturned to a vast lighted sheet on the front of the façade that showed the state of the polls. Many of them had been there since half-past eight, and it was now after midnight. They were there because they cared. Heavens, how they cared! When they cheered, one felt that the cheers came from deep down in their guts and tore their throats.

* * *

"The Labour people are in, you know, they're definitely in. Isn't this terribly like the French Revolution, with us booing inside and the crowd cheering outside?" The comparison, though often made during the evening, did not strike me as particularly apt. The ballroom was by then dominated by one of the Dolly Sisters. A floating gown of tender green chiffon fell from alternate shoulders as she demonstrated good will to all she met with forearms encased in emerald and diamond bracelets as continuous as drain-pipes. Emeralds and diamonds swung from her ears, emeralds and diamonds flung a wide loop about her neck and bosom, as she practised an immense display of vitality divorced from any cultural or even human associations. It was like going over an engineering plant and opening a huge door and finding a gigantic dynamo spinning its magics. Near by stood Mr. Michael Arlen, looking in some indefinable way like a Dolly Brother. Almost especially he did not remind me of Versailles.

* * *

I went up on the roof and walked for a while among the lovely lawns and flower-beds that have been planted there by our really remarkable host. It was a coldish night, and none were there save a few lovers. In the tulip garden only a handsome boy, square-shouldered and tall as they are preferred in the Guards, drooped with a little golden curlicue of a girl over a sun-dial. Perhaps they feared that this new dispensation was going to prevent them from being perfectly and eternally happy, as otherwise they would certainly have been. The yew hedges planted round the parapets were now so high that one could not see into the street below, but the cheers rushed up past us into space. They went so fast that they must have caught up with the music of "Don Giovanni" as it slowly mounted to the stars from Covent Garden. But of course they would not go so far. It goes the whole way. In a lull between the cheers I heard a sound from the northern quarter of the night. People came up to me just then, and I tried to tell them about it, but they wanted me to hurry downstairs to a new phase of the party.

Everybody in London was there now. All the princes and princesses that are far enough from the throne to go to parties; the beautiful picture-book men and women of the foreign diplomatic corps; all kinds of rich people, all kinds of clever people; the entire

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casts of most of the successful plays in London, who mostly sat together, so that one felt as if one was moving through several imaginary societies as well as through several real societies. The cast of P. G. Wodehouse's "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" sat in one corner, and one instinctively laughed as one passed, feeling that here everything would be turned to grave silliness that is a kind of cool and stoical defiance of the limitations of life; just as one looked apprehensively at the cast of G. B. Stern's "The Matriarch" as they sat in a fan around the enormous naughtiness of Mrs. Patrick Campbell and expected them to break into Viennese-Jewish paroxysms at the Election results. But those were no longer being given. This Conservative assembly, which had just received the totally unexpected news that (as it sees it) its class had been put into circumstances where its practical extinction was threatened, was sitting in the utmost good temper while the issue of Election results was suspended, the screen rolled up, and the stage behind given over to a boxing-match between a man and a kangaroo.

* * *

Yes, they sat and laughed and clapped and cheered, and told each other that the kangaroo really loved it. Though as the kangaroo staggered about the ring, giving back the blows flatly because it had learned from experience that that was what was wanted, its sad small face delivered the most moving Election address I have ever had. "I am that which never has power," it said, "I am that which cannot make money, and own banks, and live in big houses and fight for our own hand. There are millions of us, other animals, and the helpless of your own kind, painters, poets, musicians and the poor in spirit. If you only wouldn't do this to us! I don't want to be pushed into this ring, and have all these bright lights turned on me and hear you laughing at me. Don't you see that the same thing that makes you cruel to us makes you cruel to each other?" His paws flipped forward in their great boxing gloves, his head fell back in the attitude of a holy martyr.

It was beginning to be light when we left. One could imagine dawn sitting in a drowsy heap beside the driver of one of the market-carts that was beginning to creak along the highroads into London. The crowd outside had gone home. A Labour Government, as it learned with a tiresome finality the last time Mr. Ramsay MacDonald held office, does nothing at all to one's obligation to show up at the office in the morning on time. The English guests of Mr. Selfridge stood and shook hands and said in the same level tones, "This is the best party I've ever been at. Well, I suppose we're all ruined now". Americans said, with more animation, "It certainly has been a wonderful party. But isn't this terribly exciting! Poor old Conservative England!"

I had it in my mind to tell them what I had heard on the roof, but it really was getting very late. There was a white bar at the end of every street. But if I had told them they would have been enormously relieved, though unless they knew a certain amount of English history they would not have credited its guarantee that England would remain fundamentally unchanged. For what I had heard on the roof was the sound, faint but unmistakable, of Mr. Smithers going Labour. How do you think he has managed to keep that very desirable corner of England to himself for nearly a thousand years, while Stephen chased Matilda round the counties, and the Wars of the Roses broke the mould of daily life, and the Reformation and the Civil War forbade men to sleep in their beds, and the House of Hanover put the Stuarts to sleep.

Nothing, nothing in the world, will ever unseat Mr. Smithers from the saddle he wants to ride. English perpetualism (which the foreigner is apt to mistake for Conservatism) will not fight Socialism; it will permeate it and mitigate it. Remember those indomitable foundation stones from Cherbourg pier. Attasmithers!

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# EDGAR LEE MASTERS

## *by John Cowper Powys*

THE absence in America of any formidable body of sophisticated criticism, of any banked-up volume of unchallenged taste, results in a certain wavering uncertainty with regard to literary values from which a poet's temporary prestige may sometimes suffer, as it would be impossible for it to suffer in any European country where opinion penetrates so quickly from the center to the circumference; and where, once established, it gathers about it that curious glamour which the homage of many minds confers.

Had any French or German, or even English poet, done for modern provincial life what Masters has done for such life in America his position would be one of unassailable importance.

But the size of the country and the absence of such acknowledged authority make it possible in America that a poet of enduring depth and originality should constantly find himself being pushed into the background by flashier wits and more ephemeral reputations.

Poetic prestige, as such, does not wear in America that sort of "divine right" in which, when once it has been stamped and sealed by the "imprimatur" of intellectual authority, it clothes itself in the older countries.

The fact that Mr. Masters is a very voluminous writer, the fact that, in such a mass of work, there is bound to be much that is uninspired, is not the cause of this wavering estimate, this uncertainty, this absence of unassailable renown. Had he published nothing but what was in every way up to the high level of his best work I doubt that his position would be any more exalted, any more pontifical.

*Spoon River Anthology* remains, in the face of all detractions, the most original work —with the exception of Theodore Dreiser's novels—that American genius has produced since the death of Henry James. Nor could it have become what it is if its author had not in his own nature combined a deep Rabelaisian zest for the freer aspects of this gross village life with an infinite loathing of its cramped limitations. In the contrasted intensity of his love and his hate for this America of his, Mr. Masters's mind is an almost perfect medium for the precise enterprise that blind chance or his good tutelary genius set him upon undertaking.

But it is not only in *Spoon River* that this unique autochthonous voice is heard. The reader will doubtless recall that terrible poem of Swift's which so blasphemously terminates with the words of the Almighty:

> I to such blockheads set my wit
> And damn you all. Go, go—you're bit!

I should like to place side by side with this the beginning and the end of a poem of Mr. Masters, entitled "Cities of the Plain", in which he brands with deadly wrath a typical American town:

> Where are the cabalists, the insidious committees,



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The panders who betray the idiot cities
For miles and miles towards the prairies sprawled,
Ignorant, soulless, rich,
Smothered in fumes of pitch?

. . . . . .

Through the parade runs swift the psychic cackle
Like thorns beneath a boiling pot that crackle.
And the angels say to Yahveh looking down
From the alabaster railing, on the town,
O, cackle, cackle, cackle, crack and crack
We wish we had our little Sodom back!

Certain hammer-blows of his, when he is in his angriest mood, have a metallic and resonant finality that makes one think of those sarcastic outbursts in Milton's controversial sonnets, such as that famous one directed against the Scottish Divines where the poet rhymes "Tetrachordon" with Gordon, and "gasp" with Galasp. Indeed, in some of the most recent of Masters's poems—particularly where he is attacking prohibition—there occur passages of thunder-bolt precision, marbly and polished, deadly in their Dorian descent; reminiscent of the rhythm one enjoys in that famous line in *Samson Agonistes* —"eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves!"

The truth is that all this malice in Masters—"the soul of Rabelais dwelling in a dry place"—springs from the same region of his mind as do his outbursts of sympathy for the victims of these maladjustments. It is indeed when, in one combined up-welling from the depths of his nature, there bursts forth an imprecation and an absolution, that his lean, stripped, sardonic measures gather to themselves a verbal intensity unlike anything in literature. At these moments, tones, rhythms, turns of speech are evoked, of such naked mortal emphasis, that subject and style cease to be separable, so transmuted are they by the quality of the feeling. But it shall be as an example of a tenderer vein than the one usually associated with him that I will quote the heart-rending epitaph of Mabel Osborne in the *Anthology:*

Your red blossoms amid green leaves
Are drooping, beautiful geranium!
But you do not ask for water.
You cannot speak! You do not need to speak—
Everyone knows that you are dying of thirst
Yet they do not bring water!
They pass on, saying
"The geranium wants water"
And I who had happiness to share
And longed to share your happiness;
I who loved you, Spoon River,
And craved your love,
Withered before your eyes, Spoon River—
Thirsting, thirsting,
Voiceless from chasteness of soul to ask you for love,
You who knew me and saw me perish before you,
Like this geranium which someone has planted over me,
And left to die.

There is a purely philosophical reason why the real importance of Masters's achievement is likely to be rated more highly by posterity than by his contemporaries. This is the fact that his philosophy of life, like that of the great neglected poets in his library, is neither optimistic nor pessimistic; but full of a stoical resignation that influences you indirectly and sideways, like an unseen "black" frost permeating the atmosphere.

For even the most disillusioned and antinomian writers of our time, whose chief rôle is an ego-centric solipsism, make of their contempt for the older systems a sort of Pyrrhonean "credo" which, in its brilliant, flippant dogmatism, hits you like a catapult. But Masters has nothing of this sensational cynicism. There is something almost Confucian in the obstinate rigor of his sublimated common sense. And it is just because of such an indomitable vein of antique aplomb in this modern American that the earthy loam of his genius breeds such sad humorous pity for human fate as it universalizes itself by the banks of a little Illinois creek.

Not that by any means do all of these truth-speaking "revenants" die with a curse upon

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their lips. Hear the words of Lucinda Matlock, a "justified mother of men" after the heart of Walt Whitman himself:

I went to the dances of Chandlersville
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden . . .
. . . . .
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent, and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life.

In meditating upon the relentless spleen and intense *physical nausea* which mark all his allusions to the faith of the Puritans, I find myself wondering whether this poet of the villages of the Great Plains has not felt an emanation of something furtively polytheistic rising up from this untamed, this untamable landscape! These Amos Sibleys, Oak Tutts, Thomas Merritts, Elmer Karrs, are not the only mortal men who have moved across these prairies! A poet sensitive to the tutelary presences of the deep earth, a poet who has angrily stripped himself of biblical tradition, a poet detached from, and yet saturated by, the usages of slow-moving small-town lives, can we not imagine that the drifting ghosts of the aboriginals of this vast country might leave some touch of their sorcery upon him?

Indigenous or not to the land he writes of, there certainly hover now and then over the level movement of his verse strange, mystical intimations. As it happens with Wordsworth, who also in his less inspired hours has such a lack of porousness, the very solidity of Mr. Masters's mind, his grim pot-house humor, his massive quizzical passivity, give a vibrant convincingness to these rarer visions. When such wild hawk wings do sweep across the heavy ploughlands of his steady furrowing their reality is like the reality of life itself. One of the most striking of these interludes is that queer poem entitled "The Star"; a poem the mere existence of which, in a later volume, proves that he is not in any sense the poet of one single book. There is something about this poem that seems, to my mind at least, to carry an imaginative suggestiveness unequalled in modern American poetry.

And it is real *imagination*—not just a clever fancy, not just a picturesque image, or a startling recondite *tour de force*. What I mean is that this strange poem reveals a floating intangible whisper from the earth-consciousness itself, penetrating the thickest human skulls as they go to and fro about their affairs. There are perturbations of sudden approach, "fallings from us, vanishings", disquietudes and tremors, produced by the tap of a dead leaf, the rustle of a branch in the wind, a footstep in the silence of dawn, the trotting of a horse "beyond the creek" which touch now and again the most sodden brains, the most hard-boiled nerves, with an uneasy sense of mystery. And what one feels that Mr. Masters has caught just here is that deep withdrawn vein of secretive *insanity* lurking under so many weather-beaten foreheads in these places, under so many high cheek-bones, hollow eye-sockets, and lean ribs!

And he is profoundly original in his manner of conjuring up this insane element from beneath the mask of bully-boy *bonhomie* in American small-town life. Compare the "mad Frederick" of this extraordinary poem with the idiot-boy of Wordsworth's verse, or the idiot-girl in Dostoievski's *The Possessed*. The English and Russian idiots are just tragic personalities, among the rest. But "mad Frederick" is a myth, a symbol, the incarnated "eidolon" of a widespread uncanny

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tendency among such by-products of the "growth of the soil".

Can we not see "mad Frederick" stepping off the last board of the wooden side walk, shuffling out into the mud at the end of the village street, with the leaden-colored horizon in front of him now, the same as he has seen it and loved it or hated it from infancy; that leaden-colored horizon between Nellie Clark's shanty and the ruined fence where Roger Heston was killed by Prickett's cow? "Mad Frederick" is the composite soul of all the heaven-inspired misfits in the town, in all these ramshackle towns! There, as we watch him peering for his "star" in the road-puddles, fearful lest Griffy the Cooper catch sight of him from among his tubs, fearful lest Bert Kessler be out with his gun; or as we follow him to the edge of Hare Drummer's pond, where the twisted willow-roots have seen three generations of his type, moving, slouching, muttering, do we not get on the track of something as dark and inexplicable as it is terrible with a strange beauty?

In Masters's most characteristic work, as you ponder upon it in the first *Anthology*, the poetic element is deliberately suppressed for the sake of the pitiful and the human. But when at rare moments this element *is* permitted full play—the milieu still remaining that of the small rural community—a unique effect is produced! This is noticeable in the poem called "The Sign", another fine poem in a later volume, where that peculiar voice of the inanimate which is always projecting itself like a goblinish commentary upon our futile proceedings, in doorways, in chimneys, in floor-boards, in gate-hinges, in clock-tickings, rises to the pitch of a wistful malediction:

> There's not a soul on the square,
> And the snow blows up like a sail,
> Or dizzily drifts like a drunken man
> Falling, before the gale.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> But I do not seem to mind
> The snow that makes one blind
> Nor the crying voice of the wind—
> I hate to hear the creak of the sign
> Of Harmon Whitney, attorney at law;
> With its rhythmic monotone of awe.
> And neither a moan nor yet a whine,
> Nor a cry of pain—one can't define
> The sound of a creaking sign.
>
> Especially if the sky be bleak,
> And no one stirs however you seek,
> And every time you hear it creak
> You wonder why they let it stay
> When a man is buried and hidden away
> Many a day!

It is a great mistake to assume that Mr. Masters's genius has not remained fully alive; now that thirteen years have passed since the publication of *Spoon River*. A poem like "Tirzah Potter", published recently in the Century Magazine, is sufficient proof of this. But the quality diffused through all his work did surely condense its rare essence in that disconcerting volume to a degree never since surpassed. And nowhere else but in America, nowhere else but in the Middle West, could all these outraged, thwarted, frustrated, poisoned human spirits, drawing their lineage from every race in Europe, whirl up out of the dust as they do here with a sound like that sound that made Dante tremble and even Virgil turn pale, on the brink of the Inferno.

And the way they play into each other's hands, the way they turn and rend each other, the horrible irony of their partial angles of vision, their furious stupidity, their crazed greed, their nauseating self-humiliations,—all these things, as one gives oneself up to them, gradually evoke an attitude towards life upon earth which—whether "philosophical" or not—is free from all affectation of esthetic or moral superiority. For where *Spoon River* is so great, where it overtops all recent American work—unless, as I have hinted, you throw the weight of Dreiser's writings into the scale—is in its extraordinary indulgence for what is called "sin". With the exception of some half-dozen cold-blooded exploiters of

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the people, not a ghost among these wraiths but is understood, condoned, allowed for, and forgiven. In the rank mephitic arena of all this squalor the poet preserves his grand, equal, unmitigated equilibrium, as he had learned it from his classic models.

It is noticeable that Mr. Masters, once again rather in the manner of Chinese than of European sages, finds the dominant element in life to be pure Chance. Moralists love to talk of "character" being fate; but what could "character" do to save half these poor doddypolls from their miserable destinies? Accident here, accident there—and the battle not to the strong, neither the race to the swift; but time and chance waiting for all men!

Mr. Masters ought to have been made Poet Laureate of America for thus touching "the real and true"—those dogs "that must to kennel"!—with the transmuting fingers of genius. Not all perhaps have ears to catch the subtle cadences, evoked from the common speech of men, that lend to these immortal monodies their woebegone charm. Woodcuts are they from the poisoned trunk of the upas-tree of the world! Easy, simple, forthright, do they appear, upon the surface—just like the chat at an afternoon's collation, between Epistemon and Friar John. But who can imitate, who has ever tried to imitate, their crafty artistry?

Certain endings to these universal vignettes stick in one's mind like the half-lines of the great poets:

I sat under my cedar tree.
All were gone, or broken-winged or devoured by life—
I sat under my cedar tree.
My mate, the mother of them, was taken—
I sat under my cedar tree,
Till ninety years were tolled.
O maternal Earth, which rocks the fallen leaf to sleep!

One could, I daresay, analyze the shrewd balancing, in passages of this kind, of vowels and consonants; the cunning assonance, the skilful onomatopœial! The striking thing about it all is the limpid simplicity. Could anything, for instance, be more to the point than this, of Mrs. Kessler, who took in washing:

For things that are new grow old at length,
They're replaced with better or none at all;
People are prospering or falling back,
And rents and patches widen with time.
No thread, or needle can pace decay,
And there are stains that baffle soap,
And there are colors that run in spite of you.

. . . . .

And I, who went to all the funerals
Held in Spoon River, swear I never
Saw a dead face without thinking it looked
Like something washed and ironed.

I cannot feel that we have yet done justice to this completely new form of poetry. The clarified objectivity and austere condensation of the Greek Anthology gave Masters his cue; but the form he uses seems to have grown between his hands out of the earth itself—an organic plant of American soil—as was Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. It is in fact a reply to *Leaves of Grass* from the viewpoint of those Children of Adam whose engendering has been blighted and whose days gangrened by their "democratic" environment.

There is one human subject, however, that both as a realist and a classicist Masters can treat after his own heart to the furthest limit and the result be only noble and beautiful! Am I not on sure ground when I say that the essential greatness of a poet can be judged better by what he writes of Death than by anything else? I doubt if any modern poet, either in England or America, has written of death more nobly than in what follows. The poem is entitled "Howard Lamson" and it appears in the *New Anthology:*

Ice cannot shiver in the cold
Nor stones shrink from the lapping flame.
Eyes that are sealed, no more have tears;
Ears that are stopped hear nothing ill;
Hearts turned to silt are strange to pain;
Tongues that are dumb report no loss;

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Hands stiffened, well may idle be;
No sign is from a breathless breast.
Beauty may fade, but closed eyes see not;
Sorrow may wail, but stopped ears hear not;
Work is, but folded hands need work not;
Nothing to say is for dumb tongues.
The rolling earth rolls on and on
With trees and stones and winding streams—
My dream is what the hillside dreams!

To my mind this variation upon the old Shakespearean theme—"Thou thy worldly task hath done; Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages"—is proof that upon one topic at any rate idealism is less moving than realism!

I think it is in the rugged naturalness of a soul whose powers of love and hate are equal, that now and then Mr. Masters touches a chord of emotional intensity such as, just because we have acquired a certain clever shame at feeling directly and simply, has become rare among us. An excellent example of what I mean occurs in a poem of his entitled, "I shall never see you again". Possibly we might even discover here, in the poet's forgetfulness of "art" and "reader" and "philosophy" and all overtones and undertones, a justification for the authentic human affections in the Middle West! At any rate no European poet, except perhaps Wordsworth, has had the heroic naïveté to write in just this way of such a simple loss:

If I could only see you again—
If I could only see you again!
How can it be
I shall never see you again?
For the world has shown it can roll on its way
And blot you out forever—
And I shall never see you again!
I thrill as one who slips on the edge of a gulf
When I think I shall never see you again!

. . . . .

The breath of memory stirs me
Under the rock.
I must have the madness of life to drive me,
To toss me
Into forgetfulness of my loss of you—
For I shall never see you again!

To get the taste of our modern sophistications out of one's mouth let us come back once more to one of the great simple, authentic utterances which are this poet's true contribution to English literature:

Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years.
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife or kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven.
Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield.

That single line—"Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago"—has, for the present writer, the mellow toll-pike flavor of many a Shakespearean tavern-catch. But it is the thought, the feeling, the mood, which is Shakespearean; the style is the style of Edgar Lee Masters.

And is it not clear that to transmute into an enduring work of art the actual lives of a representative group of typical Americans, their grotesque misadventures, their pitiful recoveries, reprieves, despairs, escapes, with the kind of background which extends from Cleveland to Omaha, is a far more difficult imaginative achievement than to do what Lindsay does, or Sandburg, or Frost or Robinson?

Edgar Lee Masters is a solitary figure in American letters and he is likely to remain so. Not one of the dominant modern tendencies plays any part in his work. In this respect he is as un-porous as his own *Starved Rock*. The subjective pessimism of our age does not touch him. The modern fashion of reducing all the idiosyncrasies of human character to certain unconscious psychic forces leaves him cold.

In the midst of a generation that turns, jaded and cynical, towards a de-personalized natural magic, where even the very elements themselves—rain and vapor and twilight and drifting clouds—seem to be purged of all hu-

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man association, he persists in finding his chief poetic interest, just as the great Eighteenth Century humorists did before him, in individual, personal, happy, unhappy human beings!

He regards the peculiarities of these "learned Thebans" with the steady, unfastidious, sociable, quizzical eye of an Addison or a Doctor Johnson. He is aware of the precarious tenure of their brief but not unredeemed lives. He takes them for what they *feel* themselves to be, what they *act* as being, what they *appear* to one another. These queer birds, these odd fish, are his real interest. They are his triolets, his villanelles, his rondels, his rondeaux. And I think they will return their debt with interest! For when new Freuds have appeared and have disappeared, *these will remain* "in midst of other woe than ours", a tragic-comic population, not often introduced into the society of the Muses, but once there, not easily dislodged!

# TO BARNS

## *by Elizabeth Coatsworth*

Praise be to barns
Praise to their mighty roofs
Praise their stout floors
That echo to wide hoofs;
Praise generous doors,
Silos like flanking towers,
Cart sheds, hen-roosts, corn-cribs—
Attendant powers!
Their lightning rods jut out
Against the sky,
The gold manure piles
Below them lie.
Scarlet or white or with such sheen
As moth-wings give
They dwarf the rigid shells
Wherein men live.

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# THE BOOM IN PEACE BOOKS

*by John Carter*

THE WAY OF PEACE. Essays and Addresses *by Robert Cecil* (John Day. $3.00)

AMERICA AND EUROPE AND OTHER ESSAYS *by Alfred Zimmern* (Oxford. $3.00)

WAR AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POLICY AND ITS RENUNCIATION IN THE PACT OF PARIS *by James T. Shotwell* (Harcourt, Brace. $3.50)

THE PEACE PACT OF PARIS. A Study of the Briand-Kellogg Treaty *by David Hunter Miller* (Putnam. $3.00)

THE POLITICS OF PEACE *by Charles E. Martin* (Stanford University. $4.00)

Now that Japan has ratified the General Pact for the Renunciation of War, thereby bringing it into effect, while General Dawes and Premier MacDonald are making perceptible headway in the realm of naval reduction, it is important to note the change which is come over the spirit of international relations. That change is, candidly, in the direction of franker speech and more open expression of international opinions. While European comment on our proposed tariff may cause apprehension and annoyance, it is certainly preferable to the obsequiousness and frank flattery which characterized the European comment during that wild four years, 1914-18, when war was an instrument of policy and both parties to the Continental struggle hoped to profit by our participation.

Twelve years ago, had you searched the book shelves for such titles as these, you would probably have been called pro-German. Twelve years ago their authors would not have written them. They were themselves enthusiastically engaged in employing war as an instrument of policy. Today, almost any book whose title contains the magic word, "peace", is assured a warm reception and a fair sale, where twelve years ago the same fate awaited the word, "war", when plastered on the jacket of a book. Now, "peace" commands prices from $3 to $4 a volume, and "war" goes for thirty cents in the remainder sales. There are no two ways about it: we are in for an era of peace.

The five volumes under review are excellent examples of "peace" literature. They range all the way from infatuated preoccupation with the League of Nations, through earnest and prayerful consideration of the Kellogg Treaty, to speculation on the course of political life in a world which has been freed from the fear of war.

Viscount Cecil is heart-and-soul for the League of Nations. His book is a collection of essays and speeches prepared in the course of the last eight years. Alfred Zimmern has been associated with the League's work for intellectual co-operation. He is a naïve propagandist (in the best sense of the word) for American participation in the League. Pro-



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fessor Shotwell is head of the Propaganda Fidea conducted by the Columbia Curia and Internationalist College of Cardinals assembled around the pontifical figure of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler in the work of the Carnegie Foundation. He is an adroit advocate for the subordination of American policy to his conception of world interest (which runs quite close to some Americans' conception of British interest) and he is one of the subterranean architects of the Kellogg Treaty. His book is a collection of his newspaper publicist activities during the time when the treaty was under the eyes of the American public. Mr. Miller, an expert diplomatic draftsman, was legal adviser to the American Peace Commission and has never recovered from it. His book consists, half, of a rather biting commentary on the negotiations leading to the signing of the Kellogg Treaty and, half, of the documents pertinent to those negotiations. As these documents have already been printed by the government at a cost to the purchasing public of fifteen cents, more or less, their inclusion in a three-dollar volume is amusing. Professor Martin is head of the faculty of Social Science at the University of Washington. He stands, torn between admiration for the theoretic grandiosities of Professor Shotwell and the practical common sense of President Hoover. In consequence, his book is a combination of idealism and pragmatism which arouses speculation and satisfies the demand for specific information on international relationships.

To understand the varying positions of these men, it is necessary, first, to realize that Viscount Cecil and Mr. Zimmern are Europeans, and to Europeans the League of Nations is of practical importance; that Professor Shotwell and Mr. Miller are primarily interested in the Kellogg Treaty as a means of tying us to the actual League of Nations—the former in the interest of the international scheme of things and the latter in the name of consistency with his own share in the drafting of the covenant of the League; and that Professor Martin is, somewhat innocently, trying to discover the practical effect of the ideals embodied in both the League and the treaty.

Cecil's view of the League is candid. He says: "The League of Nations is not an end in itself. It exists to make effective the will to peace of the peoples of the world. Unless there is that will to peace the League has no reason for its existence". He wants to create a world-state on the basis of the League:

> We have to go on building up international safeguards against war. We cannot afford to rest and be thankful. There is very much to be done. We have got the barest sketch of an international organization, a sketch of an international Parliament, an international executive, an international judiciary and an international civil service, but not more. We have scarcely even laid the foundations of an international police force.

He values the Kellogg Treaty simply as a means of strengthening the League. In this he would find himself in full agreement with Mr. Miller who proclaims that "inevitably the Treaty will add enormously to the prestige and solidity of the League of Nations".

Mr. Zimmern's contribution to the general subject is splendidly simple:

> Our aim should rather be to make a living British-American relationship an opportunity for a joint adventure into other more difficult realms. For such a joint adventure the League of Nations affords a magnificent opportunity, and when once the United States realizes what they are missing they will undoubtedly hasten to join.

The character of the "joint adventure", thus temptingly dangled before us, is outlined as the elimination of absolute sovereignty, of progress through increasing centralization (except through the League) and of "a system of checks and balances designed to ensure stability against the danger of too rapid change". The elimination of the American system of government and the disintegration of the American union are stirring

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thoughts. We have fought two wars to establish that government and one to maintain the union, but now that war is no longer an instrument of policy Mr. Zimmern's modest proposals may receive serious attention.

The Shotwell and Miller books are written from a strong personal bias. Both approve of any device which will subordinate our "arbitrary and egotistical" national policy to that of the Geneva organization. Both agree that we are "morally" bound by the treaty to accept the League Council's decision concerning the aggressor state and to participate in economic sanctions against such a state. Both affirm that the freedom-of-the-seas issue no longer applies, because all British blockades will be "League blockades" and that we will lightly accept interference with our commerce and subversion of our rights as neutrals provided the restraining injunction bears the proper Geneva imprint. Both agree that the treaty will stimulate the cause of international disarmament and the methods of arbitration, a world court, conciliation and conference for settling international disputes.

Professor Martin simply tries to apply these principles. He sees that the treaty has created "new politics, in the form of the politics of peace. Self-discipline for the individual; self-government for the state; self-restraint by the great international society! These are the cardinal objectives of the politics of peace!" He analyzes current political creeds and international policies, indicating the extent of change which is necessary to accord with the new international orientation. His book closes with sixteen propositions, as a working basis for the organization of peace, which are worth quoting in their entirety, but must here be compressed as follows:

1. An effective democratization of government. 2. An intelligent public opinion must be developed. 3. Majorities must respect the rights of minorities. 4. Social control should be developed in keeping with scientific advance. 5. A divorcement of militarism from politics. 6. Diplomacy should be restored to its position as a process of peace. 7. A technique should be developed which will absorb the will to conflict and to fight. 8. War must be made more and more impolitic through renunciation. 9. War must be made illegal as well as impolitic, not only as a means of inflicting an injury, but as a means of redressing one. 10. There should be established in international law a universal standard of conduct, internationally recognized. 11. The category of justiciable questions must be enlarged and that of non-justiciable questions diminished. 12. Governments should be limited, and intrusted with power, in the interest of peace. 13. The limitation of armament must continue. 14. The rights of neutrals in maritime war must be re-defined, if neutrality is to continue. 15. The foreign offices must be reorganized in the interest of the peace needs of the people, and in keeping with the growing democratization of foreign policy through popular control. 16. We must refuse to lose the issue in a battle between social categories and social attitudes.

In spite of some vagueness in terminology this is a practical and stimulating book, and goes far to offset the undiluted idealism of the other commentators on world peace.

One final comment, found in none of these books, must be made. There is so general an assumption that American membership in the League of Nations would be a momentous step in the direction of world peace that it deserves to be critically examined. May it not be that the League, without America, is on its mettle to demonstrate its power to deal effectively in the interest of world peace? May it not be that America, outside of the League, is on its mettle to prove its will to direct its national policy in the interest of world peace? If both peace-making forces were merged, might not the peace-movement lose some of its actual emulative stimulus? In other words, have we not now established a new balance of power, of peace-power instead of war-power, which may prove as effective in preserving peace as the old balance of power was efficient in fomenting war? Here is a theme which the peace-mongers have yet to discuss. In the meantime, there will be no war for a good long time. The world can't afford it.

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# FICTION

## THE HISTORY OF EGG PANDERVIL *by Gerald Bullett* (KNOPF. $2.50)

MR. BULLETT'S novel is about Egbert Pandervil, whose father, the youngest son of a wealthy Guernseyman, was cast off by his family for marrying a pretty kitchen wench he met during his last year at Cambridge. Egbert, commonly called Egg, is distinguished from his humdrum brothers and sisters by a sensitivity and a love of beauty, presumably inherited from his father's family. The milieu in which he grows up is that of English farmers—poor, good-natured, stupid. Mr. Bullett shows him as a poet, idealistic, endowed with traits which his position in life will never permit to develop, yet not sufficiently ambitious, not sufficiently conscious of the difference between himself and his neighbors and relatives, to find a new way of life which might have satisfied him. The consequence is that as he grows older he tries, unsuccessfully, to adapt himself to a life that nature never intended for him.

His first, and only, love affair is with Monica Wrenn, who is visiting the Vicar, her uncle. Her visit is cut short; they never meet again, but the memory of this episode remains with him and colors his entire life. It is symbolical of a happiness which he will never more than glimpse, for he grows up into a country grocer, marries a country girl without really particularly wanting to, begets children, and in general leads an uneventful dreary life. It is punctuated by such events as throwing his unspeakable mother-in-law out of the house; but on the whole Egg lives more in his imagination than in actuality. He goes through the form of being a successful rural grocer; actually it seems ridiculous for him to be in such a position. He tries to love his wife, but again can only go through with the mere form of it. She is incapable of understanding him; as she grows older she becomes more and more petty and nagging. Egg would never admit it even to himself, but he would not be particularly alarmed if she died any day; only the thought of Monica (who marries a major in the Coldstream Guards) gives him any real feeling. The book closes on a slightly less unrelieved note by having Egg find a certain happiness in his youngest son.

There is a sharp division in Mr. Bullett's novel: the first part has to do with the hero's hopeful, poetic youth, his short ecstatic love affair; while the second, showing his mature workaday life, is by contrast excessively dreary. This does not seem exaggerated; it is genuinely moving. Moreover Mr. Bullett has avoided sentimentality where nine out of ten authors would have succumbed. *Egg Pandervil* deserves all the eulogistic adjectives you can think of.

## BEAUTY? I WONDER *by Dorothy Coursen* (ELLIOT HOLT. $2.00)

THE CHANGE from the emotional freshness of childhood and youth to the deadening compromises of early maturity is the subject of Miss Coursen's book. Her heroine, Emily, is thirteen when the story begins; for the short time of her childhood that remains, she is blissful in her love for her school-friend, Theresa. Childhood ends when she sees Theresa kissing a boy; the world of adults opens before her.

Now she would deal in the thoughts of clothes and coquetry, of the price of market



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goods and the way to comb one's hair. She would never again experience a taste without considering its price. . . . . God in His mercy has strange ideas to thrust children from the intelligence of their lives into the vapid, arid desert of grown-ups.

That is Miss Coursen's thesis, and it is beautifully, if somewhat unevenly, handled. The various characters are taken through adolescence until their lives are pretty well determined. Emily marries a serious young man whom we first saw as a boy stifling his romanticism with ambition. The girl whom we have seen as an intensely emotional child he sees as a sweet little wife, nothing more; he is conscious at times of a vague disappointment. Emily's brother marries a sentimental hollow German girl who makes an admirable housekeeper for her father-in-law. Emily's sister, almost resigned to becoming an old maid, miraculously meets a boy whom she had fallen in love with years before, and they marry. Theresa, first of the children to mature, is left unmarried, thwarted in love.

Such a resumé gives no adequate conception of the book's feeling and style. The characters, notably that of Emily, are memorably portrayed; that of the father is the only one that is unconvincing. The relationship between Emily and her mother is skilfully conveyed; she wants to confide in her, but never can; and the mother, in turn, always feels a wall between herself and her children. There are faults in this novel; such as the marriage of Emily's sister to her childhood beau, which is not credible. But the delicate, clear-cut style and the genuine perception, neither mawkish nor Pollyanish, with which Miss Coursen views her characters, make her book one of the few that will still be read when they are a few months old.

HUNKY *by Thames Williamson* (COWARD-MCCANN. $2.50)

THIS is the story of Jencic, the great big slow stupid man who worked at a bakery, piling up sacks for six dollars a week. Jencic lives in a world all his own; his friend Krusack, the head baker, a family man, shows him that life holds something more than work and bad whiskey; and Teena, the fiery little girl who also works at the bakery, finally draws Jencic into a larger life by marrying him, after her lover deserts her.

The book is unusual in the simplicity of the milieu which it depicts. Its few characters are forcefully, but rather narrowly, drawn. Krusack is always a good, generous, helpful friend. Teena is always fiery. Jencic is always oxlike. In fact, Jencic's bovine quality seems to me to be overdrawn. He is always in a fog, knows he is an immigrant but has no idea whether he is a Czech, a Polack, a Croat, a Hungarian or the late Tsar. He has no idea how long he has been working at the bakery. When someone asks him,

> . . . this was too much for Jencic. Ho! but it was an upsetting thing to be working away at your work and suddenly look up and find a man there . . . and him ask you questions.

Ho! but this is the kind of workman that some people seem to think is the real thing. Ho! but unfortunately it is nothing more than an advanced case of amnesia. Ho! but who ever thought "Ho!" anyway?

In short, Jencic is an exaggerated type whom the author presents as typical. He is shown as typifying the humble laborer in our midst, the man of brawn minus brain. But Jencic not only has no brains, he has no memory, he has no physical courage, for years and years he has no sexual consciousness, which is the first thing you would expect him to have. To make up for all his defects he is terrifically gentle. He would not harm a fly. He is delightfully, whimsically vague. Inasmuch as *Hunky* is a psychological study of one man, its hero should have a more definite background to be comprehensible or authentic. But Mr. Williamson writes smoothly and vigorously, and Jencic is sure to be accepted as a plausible workingman by ladies distinctly not of the working class.

GEOFFREY T. HELLMAN

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THE WAVE *by Evelyn Scott* (CAPE AND SMITH. $2.50)

THE writing of *The Wave* was a formidable undertaking, and, perhaps, the book is successful from the point of view of the author. But, in spite of my earnest and often angry struggle with myself to be pleased and to recognize a great novel, it leaves me peculiarly untouched. Here is verisimilitude, exact writing, comprehensiveness, and certainly an amazing knowledge of life in the various parts of the United States during the Civil War; yet not once was I stirred to any life during the reading—not once was the passionate *débâcle* of the fratricidal conflict brought home to me—and not once did a character seize my imagination and hold it. It is quite possible that I have grown old and jaded; it is even possible that my mind is a horrid blank before notable achievements. The final impression that I carried away with me was the weariness that follows a dogged reading of some sixty-odd plotless short stories all concerned with varying aspects of the same subject. In other words, the scheme of the book escaped me. It is possibly an excellent scheme. The unity of *The Wave* is patently expected to lie in the recorded effect of the Civil War on a huge number of individuals and what it did to them in given instances. From the ensemble of these varying moments is assumed a physical and spiritual picture of the conflict as a whole. There is a vague chronological order, for the book starts with the bombardment of Fort Sumter and ends with the review of the Grand Army. Yet all this (and it isn't much, after all) does not seem to justify the method. The novel must be an entity in itself, a harmonized whole from which nothing can be extracted and to which nothing can be added. Mrs. Scott might have chopped out fifteen of her scenes without injuring the plan in the slightest; she might have added twenty more sketches without shifting the balance. There is something wrong with a technique as loose and adaptable as this. The inevitability of scenes is ignored; the progression of the spiritual import is slighted; the *wholeness* of the theme is permitted to escape.

Perhaps it is this loose method that makes it impossible for me to grasp the *realness* of the Civil War. Though I witness soldiers in action, generals in conference, women behind the lines, camps, battles and all the paraphernalia of war, the struggle as a whole escapes me. Scene after scene passes before me until my mind is weary with endless variations on the same theme and the huge cast of characters that are hustled on and off the stage becomes a cast of two-dimensional figures. It is regrettable that *The Wave* should have this effect on anyone, for the extreme care, the clear intelligence, and the intense application of Mrs. Scott are always in evidence. It is not that I desire a "plot" in the ancient sense of the word; there is no "plot" in the greatest novel written during the Twentieth Century: *Ulysses;* but there must be unity, harmony, and fusion in any elaborate attempt to write a great novel. I do not find them in *The Wave*. Although the particle of cork never really moves with the waves upon which it floats but remains in the same place, I cannot conceive of this interesting fact in physical geography as being an extenuation for a new method of the novel. I cannot help but regard *The Wave* as an awe-inspiring failure.

CRESCENDO *by Ethel Mannin* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

AN ATTEMPT to set forth the struggle, spiritual and physical, of one Gilbert Stroud who, because of a youthful obsession, hates women and yet dreams always of acquiring the perfect woman, results in *Crescendo*. It is a bad book written with a great deal of vigor. Gilbert has a scar on his wrist, a scar received in childhood from his stepmother, and it stands as a symbol of his hatred for the feminine sex. Whenever he looks at the scar he hates and hates and hates. But, cruelly enough

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(on the part of his creator), Gilbert is blessed with an extremely active libido and in the back of his mind always is his desire to pluck "a rare exquisite orchid of a woman". The book, then, is an attempt to portray the troublous career of Gilbert Stroud as he seeks the perfect woman while regarding all women as his enemy. There is a deal of fierce action in the story, two or three rather stirring climaxes, a fair amount of emphatic characterization, and a tragic dénouement that is more melodrama than tragedy. The trouble with *Crescendo* is a lack of depth in all of the characterizations and the assumption on the part of Miss Mannin that the reader will swallow such an impossible line of action as that followed by the seemingly intelligent Mary Thane. All the paraphernalia of an excellent problem motion picture are here, and if an astute director can get around the unhappy ending (at least *someone* must be left happy at the conclusion of a motion picture) it will not be surprising if *Crescendo* finds its way to the screen.

HERBERT GORMAN

THIS STRANGE ADVENTURE *by Mary Roberts Rinehart* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART here abjures humor, mystery and—almost—romance, in order to give us realism in all its depressing force. Missie Colfax, the heroine, is the daughter of a Gaiety girl gone obese and a dashing small-town aristocrat who has tired of his family. On the death of the mother who has quite convincingly won her young loyalty, the girl is taken from miserable surroundings to the respectable but rather manic-depressive home of her paternal relatives, which includes an autocratic grandmother with a curious habit of washing her hands, and a decidedly suppressed aunt. Being obedient by nature, she apathetically marries one Wesley Dexter, a money-maker, of middle height, medium stoutness and a somewhat eupeptic beauty that finally fails him. Her sterling qualities of character fail to secure his presence at her dinner table, and he takes to dining out. She falls in love and almost elopes with another man who returns her intact to her home, because she cannot endure separation from an accidentally conceived son. The rest of her life is devoted to the son who goes to war and comes back safe to be lost to her in marriage.

Mrs. Rinehart obviously wished to depict the sufferings of a sensitive, spirituelle girl in sordid, though comfortable and superficially respectable, surroundings. But Missie refuses to come to life as an authentic martyr, and one is more inclined to love her relatives, if only for their sins. Missie did have brains apparently, and, lacking inhibitions, she might have ruled her self-indulgent family. Mrs. Rinehart, however, insists on her being virtuous and obsessed with mother-love, with the usual result. Her love and virtue are their own rewards!

NORAH MEADE

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# BIOGRAPHY

## THE LETTERS OF TOLSTOY AND HIS COUSIN COUNTESS ALEXANDRA TOLSTOY (1857–1903) *translated by Leo Islavin* (DUTTON. $3.00)

TOLSTOY has described his half of this correspondence as his best autobiography, but the superlative was apparently not synonymous in his mind with most self-revelatory, for in one of the letters to his cousin he complains: "As soon as I come in contact with you, I put on white gloves and evening suit —a moral dress coat".

His wife could have explained that, for did she not accuse him of always wishing to appear before the public in his "patriarchal robes", and was not his cousin, so to speak, his private public over a period of forty-seven years? The Countess, speaking of her share of the correspondence, says that his personality, being so much more striking than hers, "we of course concentrated our attention on him", which naturally fed his egotism. It is obvious from the letters that he sought at all times her approbation and often her influence at the Czar's Court (which he called The Chimney) as well as her assistance in his work. On the other hand, it must be admitted that, though he donned white gloves, she often doffed hers and attacked him even with bare knuckles. It is unquestionable that she got him "on the point" at least twice, and—did his wife ever see her letters? One would like to know.

Speaking of his neglect of his Easter devotions which Tolstoy confessed to her, the Countess asks: "Are you waiting for the moment when you feel . . . in one of those exalted conditions that make you fancy yourself of some importance? Error, downright materialism in the very feeling of piety—ever on the look-out for a subjective, sensual gratification". Again, apropos of his social theories, she says: "Tell me whether I am wrong in supposing you to hold an ever-militant attitude toward your equals, while you are ready to wait on the others on your knees".

No answer is recorded to either of these questions, but who wants a justification of Tolstoy as a religious or sociological prophet? His choice of the Countess-cousin as a correspondent is justified by the fact that he could address to her this statement of his position as an artist, the only position posterity recognizes as unassailable: "This work is of such importance to me that, notwithstanding your capacity of understanding about everything, you will never be able to understand how important it is. It is exactly as important as your faith is important to you. And even more important, if I may say so".

He might say so, and did, and she understood—which is her claim to the consideration of posterity. One could wish that Leo Islavin, in translating this correspondence, had used more idiomatic English.

NORAH MEADE

## JOHN D.—A PORTRAIT IN OILS *by John K. Winkler* (VANGUARD. $2.25)

HAVING abandoned a successful career as a reporter in the service of William Randolph Hearst to write a biography of that worthy, Mr. Winkler passes on to another millionaire in his second book, carrying with him in both style and approach the training he received as a newspaperman. That is to say, his study of the great benefactor to the human race, John D. Rockefeller, is "snappy", more than a little



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vulgar, and on the whole quite entertaining.

One of these days some one might make an illuminating volume out of the stories of the founding of great American fortunes. Mr. Winkler's brief account of the early days of the Standard Oil Company has a strangely archaic sound: Can it be that the pious, smiling nonagenarian, who plays a good game of golf and dispenses dimes to individuals and millions to foundations, is the same man who arranged for secret rebates that forced his competitors to the wall and wrote a sad chapter in the lives of the railway men who granted them? What a gap between the Rockefeller of the Ida M. Tarbell days and the Rockefeller of today!

Mr. Winkler's answer to this difference in the attitude of the public toward the gentleman is that after he had built his monopoly and laid away millions he suddenly realized that he was thoroughly unpopular and set out deliberately to buy back the public favor by dispensing vast gifts. Perhaps this is stating the case a bit too crudely; certainly there is every reason, from the early history of the man, to believe that he has always been a strange mixture of greed for gold and love of the church, a religious man who has never lost his piety and who, even while engaged in scuttling the ships of his competitors, never failed to attend church regularly and trust in the Lord. What could be more natural than to turn charitable when he had collected more money than could be used otherwise than for the benefit of humanity?

As a study of character, Mr. Winkler's book does not cut very deep. He depends a good deal more upon anecdote than upon analysis, and the complete Rockefeller remains a mystery, although one discovers a good many of his carefully guarded secrets. One knows, too, something of the remaining members of the dynasty, and discovers that the third generation will probably prove a good deal of an improvement over its two predecessors. . . . One would like to know just how the pillar of the Baptist Church has justified to himself his early business deals, although one suspects that the justification is simply Jesuitical.

The story of the origin of The Rockefeller, whose father was a man-about-the-country, good at trading horses and selling quack remedies for cancer, and whose mother was a pious woman, is interesting for itself and also for the light it throws upon the career of the son. "Doctor" William Rockefeller had business deals with his children and cheated them whenever possible to make them sharp, a lesson one of them seems to have taken quite to heart. It is Mr. Winkler's theory that the slightly rascally father died under an assumed name, having vanished from the Rockefeller scene several years before his passing; but the religious mother died in her son's home, honored to the last.

There are many and imposing figures in Mr. Winkler's book, and properly so, as Mr. Rockefeller has always believed in figures. To most of us they will not mean much; the Rockefeller fortune long ago passed into astronomical realms, and we are content to know that even if the head of the house were giving away $10,000 bills in the place of dimes he would have a very hard time breaking himself. There are stories of his estates, especially Kijkuit Hill where, in spite of its glories, all the guests have to appear at breakfast; and, quite naturally, stories of his gifts to the University of Chicago, the Rockefeller Foundation, and so on.

Mr. Winkler's book has a moral for young Americans, in addition to its good stories. (By good stories I do not mean the anecdotes cited as Mr. Rockefeller's favorites, which are all terrible.) It is this: Work hard early and late, save your money, organize a fine, big trust, give your surplus earnings to charity, hire a good press agent, have faith in God, and you will live to be ninety years old, honored among men, and admired among women. And don't overlook the secret rebates. . . .

HERSCHEL BRICKELL

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ANDREW JOHNSON, A STUDY IN COURAGE *by Lloyd Paul Stryker* (MACMILLAN. $6.00)

MR. STRYKER has selected for the subject of an exhaustive study a man who would seem at first blush to be one of the least appealing figures in the whole range of American history. Andrew Johnson, the impeached President of the United States, the inheritor of Lincoln's legislative woes, was the public scapegoat of the terrible reconstruction years. He was described by George Creel as an "unhappy, lonely man, walking the world from birth to death with only his hates to keep him company; born sordidly; sitting cross-legged as he cut and sewed, he flamed with rage against the slim, graceful patricians that passed his shop . . . blaming them for his misery, and aching for the day when he might drag them down and make them suffer what he had suffered". He *was* born in poverty and apprenticed to a tailor, but the main facts of Johnson's career as assembled by Mr. Stryker, read far otherwise.

Johnson had no formal education, but he was a man of solid attainments and sound statesmanship; on his own merits he was elected to more public offices than any other man then living. When Booth's bullet killed Lincoln, Andrew Johnson inherited his office and his enemies. Animated by a love of the Union as profound as Lincoln's, he fought Lincoln's fight. And since there was now no war to distract them, the radicals in Congress used every conceivable weapon to destroy Johnson and his plans. Unfortunately, a good deal that was said in the heat of battle has survived as history, to the very great damage of an honest, honorable and steadfast man.

Mr. Stryker has set out to see justice done. The attempt, which piles evidence upon evidence, is, in the main, a successful and convincing one. The effort to vindicate Johnson is complicated, from the popular point of view at least, by the fact that the circumstances which brought about his impeachment and trial were not clear-cut issues, but debatable points of constitutional law—very important, but extremely massive and obscure. Mr. Stryker writes with an enthusiasm, however, which surmounts the difficulty of his subject. The result is a clear and scholarly work, animated by a very moving ardor.

MARGARET WALLACE

THE STORMY LIFE OF MIRABEAU *Translated from the French of Henry de Jouvenel* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.50)

READERS have knowledge enough of Mirabeau, the statesman; what teases the curiosity is a desire to know the antecedents of this amazing sky-rocket of a man. This book supplies that want completely. Most of the story is concerned with Mirabeau before he stepped on the stage at Versailles and one is tempted to echo Arnold's comment on the circle of Shelley and Godwin with the exclamation: "What a set!"

It seems that all the members of the immediate family of the famous marquis were, to say the least, unbalanced. The old marquis had a passion for putting his people in prison: Mirabeau himself was locked up seventeen times, and all to the greater glory of literature, for he wrote books in jail! Drunkards, cranks, lechers and spendthrifts—these comprised the House of Mirabeau in 1789. According to one's point of view, the oratorical hero of the States-General is either the denial or the affirmation of the force of heredity. At his death in 1791, at the age of forty-two, he had completed just three years of important public life!

This biography begins with the birth of a son to the expectant "Friend of Man"; it ends with the removal of that son's ashes from the Pantheon after the discovery of the correspondence of Louis XVI; it verifies the folly of the Queen and the hopelessness of the Bourbon cause—a rare story, put together with strength, sophistication, and charm.

STEWART MITCHELL

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# A VARIED SHELF

ADAM, THE BABY, AND THE MAN FROM MARS *by Irwin Edman.* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

MR. EDMAN'S writing is hard to appraise. It has no obstreperous prejudices or jarring defects, and the author is intelligent, well-informed, "on the side of the angels". Yet all his virtues are of so faint a character that the reader's mind will be stimulated far more by much worse books which are, indeed, valuable for what they teach us *not* to do. Mr. Edman himself refers to his essays as "mildly philosophical prose", and mild in every possible sense are these collected papers on "We Superstitious Moderns", "Sentiment for the Cynical", "Religion and the Philosophical Imagination" and so on.

The sweet turning of a platitude appears to be the summit of this author's style, and the reiteration of this becomes sooner or later intolerable. I myself reached the breaking point in a certain paragraph on Page 138 in the essay on "Art for Philistia" which I read with accompaniments somewhat as indicated.

What troubles—and justly troubles—the critics about our civilization is not that people fail to buy books and pictures and talk the High Lingo of the nouveau art. [A bored nod to an old familiar observation.] What troubles them is that the sense for beauty and the demand for it are so notably absent and so little cultivated in our lives. [A yawn toward this repetition of the obvious.] What is needed is not so much new museums to bore more Philistines. [Mustier and mustier! Prepare to shriek.] What is demanded is a type of education and morale that will make beauty regarded as less of an effete stranger in our midst. [Flight, utter headlong flight.]

Nevertheless, this report that Mr. Edman's book sheds a faded light and emanates faint graces will probably be a minority one. It must be said that his chapters are admirably suited—with their diluted Santayana—to the pages of the "quality" magazines and doubtless have pleased many readers. For myself, I should say that Mr. Edman suggests (faintly) the effort of Randolph Bourne "to tone up our intellectual life". The difference is principally one of passion. Bourne had a passion for his undertaking that intensified his prose and sharpened his mind. Mr. Edman appears to me to lack passion in his writing.

GORHAM B. MUNSON

THE POETRY QUARTOS; TWELVE BROCHURES, EACH CONTAINING A NEW POEM BY AN AMERICAN POET. *Random House.* $10.00.

NOT all of the authors whose work is assembled in these twelve exquisite brochures are poets, and not every contribution is a poem. Two at least should never have been published at all, and only a minority deserve so distinguished a format. But Paul Johnston, the designer of the brochures, has exhibited such fastidious and discerning taste that the quality of the covers and the printing all but compensate for the comparative slightness of the material.

The poems which stand out as indubitably worthy of inclusion are Elinor Wylie's *Birthday Sonnet;* William Rose Benét's moving tribute to her: *Sagacity;* Conrad Aiken's *Prelude;* Robert Frost's *The Lovely Shall Be Choosers;* Robinson's *Prodigal Son.* Genevieve Taggard's *Monologue for Mothers (Aside)* is a touching piece, but less inevitable



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in its effect than many of her earlier lyrics. H. D.'s *Red Roses for Bronze* is curiously lacking in the sheer, bare power that has always characterized her work, and the contributions of Witter Bynner, Alfred Kreymborg and Louis Untermeyer are merely competent.

One returns the more eagerly to the finer things in the collection. Mrs. Wylie's sonnet has all the ecstasy, all the nobility, and therewith the highly wrought technical excellence that renders her last book of poems so singularly precious. Its presage of the end gives it a perhaps adventitious but no less great effectiveness:

Take home Thy prodigal child, O Lord of Hosts!
Protect the sacred from the secular danger;
Advise her, that Thou never needst avenge her;
Marry her mind neither to man's nor ghost's
Nor holier domination's, if the costs
Of such commingling should transport or change her;
Defend her from familiar and stranger,
And earth's and air's contagions and rusts.

Instruct her strictly to preserve Thy gift
And alter not its grain in atom sort;
Angels may wed her to their ultimate hurt
And men embrace a spectre in a shift
So that no drop of the pure spirit fall
Into the dust; defend Thy prodigal.

Nothing quite touches the peak that Mrs. Wylie seems to scale with a mere lift of wings. But there is an unwonted vigor in Robert Frost's performance and a deliberate delicate music in Conrad Aiken's that are genuinely refreshing. Mr. Robinson follows a familiar and delightful trail in his apocryphal enlargement on Scripture, and incidentally gives the designer an opportunity for one of his most diverting covers.

One hopes that the series will be continued, and that in future the selection of manuscripts will be given at least as much attention as the appearance of the quartos.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

THE INTELLIGENT MAN'S GUIDE TO MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY *by Juanita Tanner* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $3.50)

THIS book purports to have been written by Juanita Tanner, the daughter of Ann Whitefield and John Tanner of *Man and Superman,* for the purpose of introducing intelligent men to the hitherto exclusively feminine provinces of love, marriage and sexual morality—just as its famous model introduced intelligent women to the masculine realms of economics and finance. It is chiefly concerned with an attempted recasting of the social code to fit changing conditions of life, or to fit conditions already changed but not assimilated into the popular morality. It is postulated upon the need for moral progress as a naked alternative to social disaster.

The lively, but not especially profound person who disguises herself with a Shavian pseudonym is beguiled by her own undeniable cleverness into taking the long way round to certain rather commonplace conclusions. We cannot expect to be surprised or excited by her discovery that society at large would benefit enormously from a diminished emphasis upon sex and upon sexual attributes and aptitudes, or that the cause of social freedom would be served by a fuller co-operation between the sexes, by women in the work of society and by men in the solution of society's emotional tangles. The quality of the book is uneven, and if one or two of the chapters—specifically, those dealing with perversion and natural selection—seem to be miracles of incomprehension, the account is balanced by an illuminating discussion of prostitution and of celibacy, voluntary and involuntary.

ON THE BOTTOM *by Lieutenant Commander Edward Ellsberg* (DODD, MEAD. $3.00)

ON a dark September night in 1925 off Block Island, the U. S. Submarine *S-51* was rammed by the steamship *City of Rome* and sent to the bottom with thirty-four of her crew. This

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was the culmination of a series of naval disasters which included the loss of the *Shenandoah,* barely two weeks before, and the disappearance of Commander John Rodgers on his attempted non-stop flight to Hawaii. The Navy Department was in a quandary. Popular opinion demanded that the *S-51* should be raised and the bodies of her crew recovered. But the situation was unusually difficult. The *S-51* was down in deep water in the open Atlantic near Point Judith, notorious as "the meeting place of all the winds that blew". No large submarine had ever been raised under such conditions; there were no facilities at hand and no reliable methods of procedure. The salvage operations were placed in the direct charge of Lieutenant Commander Ellsberg and the Navy Department awaited the results, hopefully, but certainly without optimism.

It was a hazardous and heartbreaking labor which consumed many months. Twice, when success was almost within reach, it was snatched away by an accident impossible to foresee or control. With unimaginable courage and ingenuity Commander Ellsberg and his men fought on, long after the country at large had forgotten the whole affair. Not until July, 1926, was the *S-51* finally towed into dry dock in New York Harbor. Commander Ellsberg's story is an unpretentious and severely factual narrative, yet, in spite of the apparent absence of art, it contains more stirring action and more profoundly moving drama of the human spirit than almost any dozen current novels that it would be possible to name.

LIFE AND LABOR IN THE OLD SOUTH *by Ulrich B. Phillips* (LITTLE, BROWN. $4.00)

"IF INTELLIGENCE is to be gauged in political programmes," says Professor Phillips in his preface, "the conditions of life which gave them origin must first be known." This volume, one of a contemplated series tracing the development of the South, describes the "conditions of life" in that part of our country prior to 1861. Its engaging style and scholarly soundness secured for it the Little, Brown 1928 prize for the best unpublished work on American history.

Beginning "by discussing the weather, for that has been the chief agency for making the South distinctive", Professor Phillips moves through time and space in a leisurely manner—he is himself a native of Georgia—showing how the warm summers, mild winters and protracted growing-time have determined the place and manner of living, the kind of crops to be raised, the type of work to be done, the form of labor to be employed in doing it and the very language, or rather manner of speaking, to be adopted by those who live in the South. He slips easily from the Old Dominion in 1690 to Louisiana in 1800, from the Carolinas and his native state in 1750 to the Southwest in 1861. He travels through plantation country—fields, slave quarters and mansions—and cities; Negroes, "poor whites" and the gentry move across his pages, revealing their folkways and customs, their points of view and prejudices. His presentation of "The Peculiar Institution", as he calls slavery, is at once complete, fair and fresh in its approach, the freshness consisting for the most part of his discussion of the free Negroes and their peculiar position in the social structure of the South, which seemed designed for but two classes—free white, no matter how rich or poor, and slaves of color.

Those who would know the South will find invaluable information about its life and traditions, in the letters, diaries, news-clippings and photographs which are so important a part of the volume. And having come to know it in its early years, through the medium of Professor Phillips's vigorous prose, its readers will look forward with interest to the appearance of the next book in the series.

IRVING ASTRACHAN

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## INSTINCT AND INTELLIGENCE *by Major R. W. G. Hingston* (MACMILLAN. $2.50)

THIS delightfully written volume recalls the work of Henri Fabre in his *Wonders of Instinct* and *The Mason Bees*. Major Hingston is concerned with the same field—the insect world—to the study of which M. Fabre devoted his life. The author of this book, himself, gave seventeen years to the tropics. He writes with the same charm as did the Frenchman; his pictures of life beneath leaf and rock are fascinating. And he takes exception to many of the conclusions to which the other's observations pointed the way. Major Hingston answers affirmatively the question which M. Fabre answered in the negative—Do insects possess intelligence?

In his close-ups of insect life, the Major reveals spiders weaving webs and snaring flies, beetles building homes and hunting food, ants tending slaves and swarming to war. He tells of streams of butterflies embarking on thousand-mile migrations, of uncounted millions of locusts pressing northward to their death in the sea. And much of the activity which he describes is instinctive, "independent of instruction . . . unassociated with reasoning . . . possessing an end in view, of which the individual is ignorant". This instinctive behavior frequently approaches perfection, yet often the relentless rhythmic drive back of it leads to folly and helplessness. Witness the wasp that spent fourteen days making its nest on a mantelpiece look like the bark of the tree in which it should have builded. Witness the tribe of ants that went forth to hunt in their customary column-formation and, accidentally falling into a closed circle, marched round and round for days. Witness the spider which, having spun its radial threads and their reenforcements, could not go back to repair a damage but was driven on to the spinning of its spirals despite the insecurity of the foundation which eventually collapsed.

In many of the incidents set down by Major Hingston, the insects reveal their ability to remember, to reason, to choose—all of which he considers tantamount to intelligence. There are the ants who irrigated their soil; the beetles who figured out how the author had pinned down their food, and then removed the obstruction; the wasp who learned how to use a pebble as a tool in pounding its nest into shape. The Major advances the theory that all instinct has its root in some remote, deliberate act of this type; a given instinct has survived and has become general because of its utility. Many of the stages through which he believes the instinctive behavior of ants has developed are still discernible in different branches of the species. New fields of comparative psychology open up before his statement that "in their main, essential features, the minds of insects operate in the same way as the mind of man". One may go to the ant, some day in the future, to learn how to think; just as one may go to Major Hingston's book about the ant (and others) to find food for considerable and enjoyable thought, today.

IRVING ASTRACHAN

## FALMOUTH FOR ORDERS *by A. J. Villiers* (HENRY HOLT. $3.50)

IN THIS first-hand account of the race, a year ago of two great square-rigged sailing vessels from Port Lincoln, Australia, to Falmouth, England, A. J. Villiers has written the swan song of sail. And he has written it well; not romantically, but with a zest for truth and a burning love for tall ships that will stir the heart of everyone with a drop of restless salt water in his blood. In January, 1928, two large four-masted barques, under the flag of Finland, lay in the harbor of Port Lincoln, Australia, loading wheat. Both were bound for Falmouth—and, because their sailing dates were almost the same, a race became inevitable. One, the *Herzogin Cecile* (in which the author sailed as able seaman)

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took the bitter route round Cape Horn. The other, the *Beatrice,* laid her course for the Cape of Good Hope. Through the battering, icy gales of the Horn and the rolling doldrums, Villiers describes the voyage of the *Cecile* with a brilliant simplicity that brings the ship and her men to life before the reader's eyes.

He has, however, made the volume much more than the narrative of one voyage. In its pages he has packed a remarkable chronicle of the last sailing ships surviving today —their names, their histories and their place in the present maritime world. And with this he makes a plea that is difficult to deny, for a period of training for merchant-seamen in sailing ships, where men learn to pit their wits and strength against the sea, the winds and the weather, and come to close grips with the ocean without the aid of engines. This volume, which today is probably thought of as good adventure reading, will be of great historical value in a few years, when the last yard has been lowered on the deck of the last sailing ship before she is cut down for a coal barge. In all the recent research and writing of clippers and square-rigged vessels everyone has been so caught by the glamour of the past that no one before this has paid any attention to the present. The story of sailing ships today, as Villiers tells it, is tragic; but heroically tragic—a swan song that trumpets proudly at the end.

The book is illustrated with many photographs taken by the author. All of them are excellent; and many, taken from aloft on the yards and in the rigging in all kinds of weather, are unusual. They convey, better even than words, what a man's work really was, when sailors were sailors.

WILLIAM H. WELLS

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# THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA.

What the critics say about a book doesn't seem to have much influence with the readers who get their literature from the circulation departments. Here, far more than is the case with the buyers of books, the only test is "Is it a good story?" It may violate all the canons of literature—whatever they are—but if it's a good story be sure these avid readers will read it. All of which is apropos of nothing at all. About the only comment which occurs to your reporter on the subject of this month's new titles is that prize novels are doing better than they used to. But again one is forced to the reflection that times have changed, even in public libraries. Not many years ago, in practically every one of them, *Scarlet Sister Mary* would have been kept in the locked "two-star" bookcase, accessible only to adults of unimpeachable social and moral standing. Now look at it!

F. P. S.

## FICTION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. DODSWORTH | *Sinclair Lewis* | HARCOURT, BRACE |
| 2. THE BISHOP MURDER CASE | *S. S. Van Dine* | SCRIBNER'S |
| 3. THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP | *Joan Lowell* | SIMON & SCHUSTER |
| 4. DARK HESTER | *Anne Douglas Sedgwick* | HOUGHTON MIFFLIN |
| 5. MAMBA'S DAUGHTERS | *Du Bose Heyward* | DOUBLEDAY, DORAN |
| 6. SCARLET SISTER MARY * | *Julia Peterkin* | BOBBS-MERRILL |
| 7. PEDER VICTORIOUS | *O. E. Rölvaag* | HARPERS |
| 8. STORM HOUSE | *Kathleen Norris* | DOUBLEDAY, DORAN |
| 9. THIS STRANGE ADVENTURE | *Mary Roberts Rinehart* | DOUBLEDAY, DORAN |
| 10. RHINESTONES * | *Margaret Widdemer* | HARCOURT, BRACE |
| 11. OLD PYBUS | *Warwick Deeping* | KNOPF |
| 12. THE CASE OF SERGEANT GRISCHA | *Arnold Zweig* | VIKING |

## GENERAL

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. ELIZABETH AND ESSEX | *Lytton Strachey* | HARCOURT, BRACE |
| 2. THE ART OF THINKING | *Ernest Dimnet* | SIMON & SCHUSTER |
| 3. HENRY THE EIGHTH * | *Francis Hackett* | LIVERIGHT |
| 4. THE MAGIC ISLAND | *William B. Seabrook* | HARCOURT, BRACE |
| 5. JOHN BROWN'S BODY | *Stephen Vincent Benét* | DOUBLEDAY, DORAN |
| 6. RASPUTIN | *René Fülöp-Miller* | VIKING |
| 7. STRANGE INTERLUDE | *Eugene O'Neill* | LIVERIGHT |
| 8. WHITHER MANKIND? | *Charles A. Beard* | LONGMANS, GREEN |
| 9. HOWS AND WHYS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR | *George A. Dorsey* | HARPERS |
| 10. LION | *Martin Johnson* | PUTNAM |
| 11. MOTHER INDIA | *Katherine Mayo* | HARCOURT, BRACE |
| 12. MEET GENERAL GRANT | *W. E. Woodward* | LIVERIGHT |

* *This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.*



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## *Here and There About Europe*

BY ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE

TO INVITE a slight wound to self-esteem turn to the dictionary for "Holland". With crushing curtness you will be referred to "the Netherlands", under which will be found: "A kingdom in W. Europe: 15760 sq. m.: Capitals, The Hague and Amsterdam: often loosely called *Holland,* which is merely the name of two of its provinces". In a spirit of retaliation you will be likely, if you happen to know Holland and its adventurous people, to paraphrase the line from Kipling "The English Flag": "What should they know of England who only England know?" For in its little way Holland, too, conjures up visions of the Seven Seas, of dominion over palm if not over pine. The writer's memories include three visits to Holland, yet in thinking of it he thinks not merely of its street-bred people of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, nor of the cosmopolitan society of Scheveningen, nor of the picturesque costumes of the Zuyder Zee and Friesland, but rather of the far-flung outposts of its Empire, the pontoon bridge of Wilhelmstadt in Curaçao, and the dikes and canals of Java and Sumatra, for the colonizing Hollanders have made these remote possessions more Dutch than Holland itself.

But it is exclusively of the little kingdom in West Europe that Adele de Leeuw writes in *The Flavor of Holland* (Century. $4.00); a sympathetic book, not at all in the vein of Voltaire's historic summing up of the country as *"canaux, canards, canaille";* but as an American on a visit to the ancestral land. Miss de Leeuw toured Holland with her father, a native Hollander, and other members of her family. All spoke Dutch fluently and, therefore, access to the heart of the people was easy. It was appropriately in the Frisian Museum at Leeuwarden that Miss Leeuw had an experience that throws a pathetic light upon one of our political institutions which, perhaps wise in itself, is at times unhappy in its practical application.

There she met the son of the director and heard his story. He had gone to college in the State of Washington which, of all our states, approaches most nearly in climate that of Holland. He had married an American girl and had every intention of becoming a citizen. Just before the outbreak of the war he had gone on a visit to Holland for the celebration of his parents' twenty-fifth wedding anniversary and, as a Dutch reserve, was called for service. His young wife followed him, and for years lived a life of hardship and, what made it worse, could not speak Dutch. The man is a concrete construction engineer and is frantically eager to get back to America. But the quota seems to be filled for ten years.

In the Preface to his *A Wayfarer in Austria* (Houghton Mifflin. $3.00) G. E. R. Gedye makes the puzzling statement that this is the "first travel book on Austria to be published in the English language". Certainly those of us whose memories go back to travel in pre-war days recall walks about the *Ringstrasse* in Vienna with the familiar red-covered Baedeker (in English) in hand. What Mr. Gedye undoubtedly means, though he fails to make it clear, is that his is the first book in English to be written about Austria in its post-war political and geographical status. That little point settled, it is for the reviewer to say that Mr. Gedye, late Central Europe correspondent for the London *Times,* has written an absorbingly entertaining book.

He brings home to the reader a sense of



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the general misconception about the remoteness of Austria from the point of view of the Londoner or of the American traveller planning a European tour with London as the "jumping off" place. For that misconception Metternich was largely to blame. Just as Napoleon said in slighting allusion to Spain, "Africa begins at the Pyrenees", the Austrian statesman jestingly remarked that Asia began at the Landstrasse in Vienna. What he meant, psychologically, has been taken in a geographical sense. As Mr. Gedye points out, Naples is two hundred miles, and Rome one hundred miles farther from London than Vienna; and Venice but fifty miles, and the Riviera but one hundred miles nearer.

Here are three books about Greece. George Horton's *Home of Nymphs and Vampires* (Bobbs-Merrill. $3.50), recalls a romantic, forgotten heroine of modern Greece, who deserves to rank in history or legend with Jeanne d'Arc or William Tell. That was Mando, or Mano Mavrogenis. Of a noble and wealthy family, described as very beautiful and graceful, with soft voice, and black eyes full of fire, she was about twenty-four or twenty-five years of age when the Greek Revolution broke out in 1821. She threw herself whole-heartedly into the cause of liberty, devoting her entire fortune to the work of fitting out ships and paying soldiers and sailors. Sought in marriage by many suitors, on account of her wealth and beauty, she uttered the famous saying: "I will never become the wife of a slave".

In her own island of Mykonos she organized and trained a company which saved the island from an Algerian raid. Mando, at the head of her band, crying: "Victory for the Cross!", repulsed the invaders with heavy loss, driving them into the sea. With troops raised and trained by herself she fought throughout the war, shunning no danger or hardship, and contributed largely to the ultimate defeat of the Turks. Yet the modern Greeks, who still have their eyes



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focussed on Leonidas and Pericles, have quite forgotten Mando. Mr. Horton suggests that, had she lived in France, statues would have been erected and poems dedicated to her and she herself perhaps canonized.

Mr. Horton's book is a book of impressions that can also be made to serve as a guide book. William Miller's *Greece* (Scribner's. $5.00) is particularly designed for the library shelf or for the student of political conditions in the Grecian Archipelago. Mr. Miller, as an impartial observer, is committed neither to the republic nor the constitutional monarchy as being the best form of government for Greece. Greece is not England, and even in England a generation ago the Lord Chief Justice declared that "England would not stand another Charles II or another George IV". In Athens, where the sovereign must necessarily pass his whole life in the public eye and where the dynasty must necessarily be foreign, the embarrassments of kingship are far greater. Gladstone's remark that the great difficulty of constitutional monarchy is the education of the heir-apparent, is even truer of small countries than of great. The popular King Alexander, who died prematurely, is reported to have said to a person who criticized him for not reading the documents which he signed: "My grandfather signed most documents without reading them, and he reigned fifty years; my father read all documents before signing them, and he was deposed". Mr. Miller suggests that Edward VII would have been an ideal King of Greece; "but then he would have been also an ideal President of the French Republic".

As the reader of this little department has probably already noted—without resentment, it is to be hoped—the personal note is intentionally emphasized. The writer's first-hand acquaintance with Greece has been limited to two brief visits to the Piræus and Athens and the inevitable motor car rides through the immediately adjacent country. To him


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Is it not logical to suggest, then, that you give this section of The Bookman careful consideration when planning your campaign on your next travel book—this *section that is read by a market which is* interested—which will peruse your advertising—which will surely buy!




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modern Athens is one of the least interesting of cities, the dustiest of cities, and the city in which the continuous honk of motor car horns is most rasping to the ear. A hundred years ago a fishing hamlet, it has, in one sense, no more lineage than Chicago. Yet to see Athens is almost a traveller's duty—crowning the noisy, dusty, *parvenu* city is the glorious Acropolis; where one in imagination re-lives history; looks out over the sea to dream of the destruction of the Persian fleet in the Battle of Salamis; or across the mountains almost expecting to catch a glimpse of the oncoming runner bearing the news of Marathon. The writer has seen the Pyramids, the Taj Mahal, the sacred Torii of Nikko, Japan, the Temple of the Tooth at Kandy, Ceylon. But to him, among world monuments, the Acropolis ranks first. Also to know the Acropolis is to be furnished with an effective arm for the amiable international battle. Your English table companion on a transatlantic journey will undoubtedly indulge in heavily British jibes about the carrying away of England's art treasures by American millionaires. Softly you can bring up the subject of certain gaps in the Acropolis due to the depredations of one Lord Elgin.

The personal paragraph and the preceding paragraph, in allusion to Mr. Miller's *Greece,* are linked with some observations in Harry A. Franck's *I Discover Greece* (Century. $4.00). The comparative newness of modern Hellas, Mr. Franck sums up by writing "A century ago there was no Greece; it was as non-existent as King Tutankhamen". Many of the modern Greeks are as new as their country. During the centuries when all Greece was under the sultans they had been absent a dozen generations or more, and in numerous cases spoke only Turkish. It is typical of Mr. Franck that in seeking a comparative illustration he reaches across the seas to our own land, likening the Greeks of Anatolia to the descendants of those Americans from our Southern States who went to Brazil after the Civil War and who in many instances speak only Portuguese.

The King Alexander, quoted by Mr. Miller, was bitten to death by a monkey, and his successor, King George, was driven from the country with the establishment of the Republic in 1924. Politically, one of Greece's greatest present problems is due to the fact that the land has been under arms longer than any other modern power, almost continuously mobilized since 1912. But *I Discover Greece* merely touches politics. The fourteenth in the author's series of travel books, it carries on in the familiar vagabond spirit. Incidentally, Mr. Franck's original choice of title was one naturally frowned upon by decorous publishers. It was "Hot as Hellas".

The traveller who has once made the *grand tour,* as it was called in the days when the world was young, is likely to spend many pleasant and profitable hours planning or dreaming of other journeyings in more leisurely manner; of unrushed midsummer days among Norwegian fjords; of early spring days along the Cornish Riviera; or late spring days in Brittany or among the Italian hill towns. For anyone contemplating the adventures of the last-mentioned trip, here is Hubbard Hutchinson's *From Rome to Florence* (Putnam. $2.75), descriptive of what the author calls "a strip of country richer in beauty and historic importance than any other of its size in Europe". Many weeks might be happily spent in those hill-cresting villages; Mr. Hutchinson tells the story of nine motoring days; with the suggestion that the hill-town spirit and flavor might be absorbed in an even shorter time. He urges the traveller, if he would make the most of his experience, to give himself time to stroll in at least one of the smaller towns, even if that wandering must be at the expense of hours in famous galleries or before renowned churches. *From Rome to Florence* qualifies as a guide book, strictly speaking, by reason of an Appendix, in which the author offers practical advice in the matter of routes, motor expenses and hotels.

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## NOTES ON NEW BOOKS—(*continued*)

men; Colonel Watson Webb, of newspaper fame, the rival of the elder James Gordon Bennett, who participated in a semi-comic affair with Thomas F. Marshall; and Commodore Stephen Decatur who was forced into personal combat with James Barron, to the latter's misfortune. Again, Benjamin Franklin, that staunch patriot, was the cause of another duel. In all, this book covers sixteen major duels fought to uphold honor, and each chapter is filled with carefully compiled data of the sort that has made the author's other books popular.

DOLLARS FOR BULLETS *by Harold Norman Denny.* (DIAL PRESS. $4.00)

THE title of this volume is taken from a phrase coined in 1912 by President Taft, during a speech in which he defined "dollar diplomacy". Mr. Denny tells the story of intervention in Nicaraguan affairs by the United States from 1909 to the present. The motives prompting our interference in our neighbor's affairs have been, first, our interest in the Nicaraguan canal-route; second, our concern over our nationals resident in Nicaragua, whom the local government was unable to protect against revolutionists; third, the stake in Nicaraguan affairs belonging to the Wall Street bankers who reorganized the commonwealth's finances and made large loans to it. The United States, says Mr. Denny, has "invested" much money and many men in the preservation of political permanency and peace in Nicaragua; some day the building of a canal through the country will boom its prosperity and will justify that "investment".

HAVE WE KEPT THE FAITH? *by C. A. Prosser and C. R. Allen* (CENTURY. $2.75)

ONE hundred and fifty years ago, a group of men, including Thomas Jefferson, Coram, de Nemours, Knox, Samuel Smith and Noah Webster, dreamed of a system of public education which was to train every citizen of the commonwealth for the rôle which he could fill most ably. It was to be, essentially and uniquely, an American system; it was to be elastic enough to conform to inevitable change in the United States. Messrs. Prosser and Allen, surveying American education today, cry out that we have betrayed the faith of our fathers. As educators, the authors of this book suggest a remedy for the situation—the integration of school work with life outside the school. As exponents of vocational training and guidance, they suggest vocational education as the *modus operandi* for securing such integration.

MARRIAGE IN THE MODERN MANNER *by Ira S. Wile and Mary Day Winn* (CENTURY. $2.00)

HERE is a volume "that aims to be a traffic handbook through the marriage maze". It is dedicated "to those who find increasing happiness in and through marriage". The authors offer advice to be taken during all the stages of wedlock: the pre-nuptial period, the interval of early adjustment, the birth of the first child, the day of disillusion, the dark hour of "in-law" interference. Nor are the questions of careers for wives and the appearance of "the other woman" ignored. An apt quotation from Gibran's *The Prophet* brings the volume to a close.

WOMAN IN THE MAKING OF AMERICA *by H. Addington Bruce* (LITTLE, BROWN. $2.50)

THE women of America, from the early Colonial Period to the time of the Woman's Suffrage Movement, have had more to try their souls than those of any other country in so short a period. The author of this book testifies that their reputation for staunchness, courage and vitality is well founded. The rapid development of America gave rise to a series of spectacular and sudden movements and, because of the spirit in which she faced them, the Colonial woman, the woman of pioneer days, the woman of the Revolution, of the Civil War period and of the Suffrage Movement, all have taken on glamour. Whatever successes she has had, she has had to fight for. The author deals with this procession of women appreciatively. Hannah Dustin's escape from the Indians, "Mother" Bickerdyke's magnificent work during the Civil War, Susan B. Anthony's struggle for women's rights are here set down and given their due. It is a book long needed and, though the subject is compressed almost to text book treatment, it is well worth reading.

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I LIKE DIVING *by Tom Eadie* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.50)

THOSE readers who enjoyed *On the Bottom,* Commander Ellsberg's account of the raising of the *S-51,* will probably want to look into this volume by one of the master divers engaged in the *S-51* salvaging. The book is, in a sense, a companion piece to *On the Bottom.* Tom Eadie repeats some of the more stirring episodes of the *S-51* job from a slightly different angle, and proceeds to the equally bitter and heroic narrative of the *S-4* disaster. This second great battle with the sea lacks the suspense of the first, largely because the technique of using pontoons had been perfected in the meantime, but the work was complicated by the tenuous hope of rescuing the men, known to be alive in the torpedo room, and by the freezing weather in which the operations were carried out. If you want to know, without any decorative sentimentality, what it feels like to be a deep-sea diver, this is the book to read.

DRAWING WITH PEN AND INK *by Arthur L. Guptill* (PENCIL POINTS PRESS. $8.50)

WITH its many and varied specimens of line rendition, as manifested in magazine illustration and in architecture, this volume is an excellent reference work for the artist in black and white.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE *by Walter B. Pillsbury and Clarence L. Meader* (APPLETON. $3.00)

OUR speech organs were not originally designed as such, explain these two prominent authorities on psychology and linguistics respectively. The primitive movements of the vegetative organs caused sounds from the thorax, among other muscular effects, and the arrangement of the human body made these sounds a more convenient method of communication than the leg sounds made by insects or the wing sounds of the partridge. Therefore, they became standardized and associated with certain emotional and mental states. As these states grew more complex, so did the system of sounds, for the authors do not conform to the behavioristic belief that speech precedes thought. The two developed and are developing synchronously. In this comprehensive and scholarly study, the nervous, physiological and psychological factors that go to produce speech-sounds are diagrammed and analyzed so far as present data permit. Work in the field of biolinguistics has only begun but it will ultimately make possible, say the authors, the formulation of complete and accurate phonetic laws, on a basis of neuromuscular investigation, as here laid down.

WHAT IS DARWINISM? *by Thomas Hunt Morgan* (NORTON. $1.00)

DARWINISM, according to the author of this monograph, means the theory of evolution to the layman, but "to the more sophisticated [it means] the doctrine of natural selection" basic to the theory of evolution. The doctrine of natural selection, Dr. Morgan believes, has been seriously threatened by the recent work of de Vries, Johannson Bateson and others, and he is inclined to discount the doctrine because of the element of chance involved. He suggests that the apparent end of all organic life—*i.e.,* self-perpetuation—be considered as the basis of a new doctrine, to be supported by future research in bio-chemistry and bio-physics.

MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY *by Henry Ford* (COWARD-MCCANN. $1.50)

IN THIS authorized interview with Fay Leone Faurote, Mr. Ford presents his ideas upon the place of machinery in modern life, the nature of success in living and the fundamentals of human progress. These ideas, taken together, constitute his philosophy of industry, which is really Mr. Ford's life. He holds that this is not a machine age but a power age; that the mechanization of industry does not destroy craftsmanship, but creates more skilled craftsmen (in proportion to the population) than the world has known heretofore. He contends that business success rests on "a clean factory . . . clean tools . . . clean living . . . clear thinking . . . square dealing". He believes in the eventual success of prohibition and in the harmfulness of tobacco. He avers that personal success consists of finding the real truth, swearing allegiance to that truth and "going ahead full speed" and that, knowing the truth of the present, man can foretell the truth of the future.

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## *Fiction*

THE HEAVEN AND EARTH OF DOÑA ELENA *by Grace Zaring Stone* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $2.50)

THIS book is not so much a novel as a single, tensely-conceived episode—an episode into which a woman's whole life has been compressed and, by compression, rendered significant and luminous. A life of good works had deprived Doña Elena of none of her appearance of breeding or pride of race. Father Algay, though bound to administer exhortation and counsel to her, feels himself still a street urchin in the presence of a great lady. Restlessly he probes Doña Elena's soul—fearful and hopeful of what he may find—but he is always baffled and disappointed. In spite of the piety of Doña Elena's meditations, Father Algay fears that the true vision of Christ will never be manifested to her. Then an English captain, a pirate of the strain of Drake and Frobisher, captures and loots the town for the love of Doña Elena whom he had seen at the convent window. The struggle against the invasion of earthly love, a struggle which finally merges earthly and divine love into one symbol, brings death to Doña Elena and the fulfillment of her heavenly vision. It is a beautifully restrained, yet dramatic study.

STORM HOUSE *by Kathleen Norris* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

MRS. NORRIS, with the warmth and emotion which are always at her command, writes of a shell-shocked author, the three women he believes he loves and the one who actually loves him. The sturdy, loving and lovable Jane is worth reading about; the study of her emotions gives this book its character.

THE GREEN PARROT *by Princess Marthe Bibesco* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50)

A PECULIARLY dream-like book of an incestuous love between brother and sister, recurring through generations of a Russian family. The horror and final tragedy of the story is offset by Princess Bibesco's quiet prose, which Malcolm Cowley has handled so well that his translation retains all the glamour of the original.

HOBBY HOUSE *by Russell Neale* (HARPERS. $2.50)

A HOUSEBOAT of ragamuffins, with one daughter who is simple and lovely; a small-town aristocrat whose younger son still retains enough emotion to marry the beggar-maid; assorted characters, of whom the most convincing is the vixenish wife of the houseboat's master: with these materials, in an uneven but for the most part excellent style, Mr. Neale has written an engrossing book—although twenty-four hours' happiness is the most he bestows on his heroine.

PENNY DREADFUL *by Malcolm Ross* (COWARD-MCCANN. $2.00)

HERE is a newspaper novel which is more concerned with character than with the wisecracking of the city room. It tells of Tim North, his love for the wealthy, socially prominent Nancy Sargent and of Tim's divorced wife, who is the apotheosis of the minds that create the tabloids. The tabloids are the villain of the piece, threatening by their prying and scandal-mongering to destroy the happiness of four lives.

Mr. Ross has adopted a casual style which does not hide the hatred he holds for the penny dreadfuls that peddle calumny and pornography with an air of moral concern for their public. The author's sympathy is for the newspaper man of the old school and his creed: unquestioning fidelity to one's sheet and the irresistible attraction of one's loved calling.

MARION ISLE *by H. Rider Haggard* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

ANDREW WEST, a keen young London doctor and prospective heir to a large fortune, chooses to spend his time in the slums practising among the poor. He gets himself tangled up in an unfortunate and silly love affair, from which, finally, he is extricated. With his fortune and an ambitious wife (the latter acquired in a moment of weakness) he leads anything but a pleasant life. Appointed to the governorship of a distant British colony he leaves to undertake his new duties and is shipwrecked off the West Coast of Africa, on Marion Isle, finding there a new and wholly satisfactory existence. The story is a bit jumbled, but it is most readable.

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THE WOMAN WHO COMMANDED 500,000,000 MEN *by Charles Pettit* (LIVERIGHT. $2.50)

WHEN Ye-Ho-No-La became imperial concubine of the rank of "kouei jen", she had no desire greater than that of fulfilling her duty to the Holy Man, but this remarkable young lady was not one to remain content for long with simple ambitions, and not many years passed before she was the Empress Tseu-Hi.

M. Pettit's style enables him to deal delicately with the many indelicate situations at the Manchu court during the reign of the late Dowager Empress, on whose life he has founded this book. While not so bitingly satirical as his two former works, the book makes fine light reading for those who are not averse to the introduction of a little Chinese history and the author's rage against the ruthless "barbarians" from the West.

A HUMBLE LEAR *by Lorna Doone Beers* (DUTTON. $2.50)

MRS. BEERS has not drawn the analogy of her Minnesota family to Shakespeare's tragedy into any deadly parallel. It is his sons whose devotion Adam Webb over-estimates, and his daughters-in-law who bring about his disillusion. The loyal daughter, Cordelia, who leaves after her mother's death to find her own place in the world, and who later returns to save her father from exploitation and unhappiness, is a heroine worth following. But the greatest strength in the book lies in the scene where Adam Webb's dying wife, who has felt throughout her marriage that she was of finer grain than her husband, realizes and confesses that the life she has despised has been good.

COLD STEEL *by M. P. Shiel* (VANGUARD. $2.50)

SUCH a small pebble—the beauty of unknown Laura Ford—but the incredible circles touch England, France and Spain. Yet, despite the fact that the beauty was Laura's, it was her adoring sister, Bessie, maid at the Bell in Eastcheap, who became gallant and daring as the story progressed and she stands in the presence of Henry VIII or the French King, Francis I. With Laura's simple lover, Mark, and Bessie's brave Fitzgerald, jealous Anne Boleyn and the emissary from Spain, watchful of Catherine's rights, there is woven a story of that peculiar Shiel quality in both texture and design—a pattern of beauty with a steadfastness of purpose in all its intricacy. It is a dashing story of cold steel but warm hearts.

JOAN KENNEDY *by Henry Channon* (DUTTON. $2.50)

AFTER scores of novels about international marriages in which American brides have suffered from their transplantion into alien homes, Mr. Channon's novel comes to retrieve a balance. It is the story of an English girl, married to a middle-western business man, trying valiantly to lead a satisfactory life in a large American city, where every custom and standard differs from those native to her. She is not happy, and Mr. Channon does more than intimate that there is good reason for her dissatisfaction with the life she is called on to lead in a thinly-disguised Chicago.

RAIN BEFORE SEVEN *by Jessie Douglas Fox* (PAYSON & CLARKE. $2.00)

THIS is a story of sisters—Jennet, the selfish, beautiful enchantress, and Katherine, genuine and sincere—between whom stands Shawn. Truth, love and loyalty are twisted to suit the purposes of Jennet's ambition. The distortion she makes of life brings only sadness and tragedy to others and bitterness to her shallow self. In comparison, Katherine's life has an integrity and a simplicity of pattern that achieves brightness and beauty. It is a simply written story, done with understanding and sympathy and an appreciation of some of life's essential truths.

DARK WEATHER *by Marguerite E. Baldwin* (DUTTON. $2.50)

WHEN the winter sets in Jules Lattin moves to the Inn to write his novel and share in the life of the small town. There he finds June, flapper waitress, and "her crowd", and the story concerns the doings of these young people. It is not a book for the squeamish—the characters are shown in all their cheapness and vulgarity—but Miss Baldwin subtly reproduces the fever-

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ish atmosphere of the town and makes one feel the sordid tragedy of these pleasure-mad youngsters.

FISH PREFERRED *by P. G. Wodehouse* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

THE "heavy" of this piece is the Empress of Blandings, prize sow. The disappearance of the Empress has much to do with the marriages of Ronnie Fish and Sue Brown, Hugo Carmody and Millicent Threepwood, the peace of mind of young Parsloe and the writing of the Honorable Galahad Threepwood's memoirs, which are to include the immortal story of the prawns. It is all in the best Wodehouse manner, and those who know Wodehouse need be told no more.

THE ROMANTIC PRINCE *by Rafael Sabatini* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

IN THE days of Charles of Burgundy and Louis XI of France, Anthony of Egmont, heir to the Duchy of Guelders, bewailed the lack of chivalry and honor at these gay courts. But this romantic prince turns practical and in the end outwits the crafty rulers. The story of valiant knights and maidens in distress is told with all the glamour and charm that keep Sabatini's romances far beyond the reach of any possible rivals and imitators.

VIENNESE LOVE *by Hugo Bettauer* (MACAULAY. $2.00)

A WEIRD story of aristocratic Vienna. The plot centers around the murder of Frau Lia Lied, involving her lover, Otto Demel—a journalist, poverty-stricken Grete Rumfort, and Frau Greifer, a procuress for the young bloods of the city. It is not a pretty tale, but it portrays clearly and well the post-war temptations that confront the young girls of that once-romantic capital of Austria.

THE WHITE GIRL *by Vera Caspary* (SEARS. $2.00)

A BEAUTIFUL young girl, of Spanish appearance, although actually of Negro blood, who passes in New York as white, offers unlimited possibilities for drama, and the author takes full advantage of them. Solaria Cox leaves her colored family in Chicago, makes a great success in New York as a photographer's model and enjoys all the freedom and independence of the white woman. The only flaw in her happiness is the unceasing fear that her secret will be discovered, the terror that every Negro or Negro servant may see through her deception. From the time when she falls in love with a white man, the story advances rapidly to the only possible and consistent ending.

## *Detective Fiction*

THE DOCTOR WHO HELD HANDS *by Hulbert Footner* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

MADAME STOREY, that keen investigator of the crime world, pits her forces against Doctor Jacmer Touchon, who is conducting a large practice in "soul-building" and blackmail. A supreme egotist, poor Jacmer more than meets his match in Madame Storey. One of the better Crime Club selections.

SLEEPING DOGS *by Carolyn Wells* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

A FIRST-RATE detective story in which the murderer seeks to cover himself by a second murder. Eileen Abercrombie, twelve years older than her husband, is found dead. Hugh, her husband, in the midst of a "platonic" affair, is consequently in a precarious position. But Kenneth Carlisle, who is serving the interests of justice, works on another theory with astonishing results. Very readable; recommended for summer diversion.

ONE OF THOSE WAYS *by Mrs. Belloc Lowndes* (KNOPF. $2.50)

ANGELA GRAHAM, a young English widow, poor, and unhappy over her affair with Ralph Cherwell, leaves London for Monte Carlo to become companion to Princess Oranovsky. Her adventures are many and varied. Mrs. Lowndes has written, very simply, a well-planned story of international crooks, with none of the usual macabre backgrounds of the modern mystery tale.

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THE MAN IN THE QUEUE *by Gordon Daviot* (DUTTON. $2.00)

A MAN is stabbed to death in a theatre ticket line and Inspector Grant of the C. I. D. is assigned to bring to justice the owner of a small stiletto. There are few clues and many wild-goose chases before the criminal is discovered. A well told tale.

THE STOLEN MILLIONAIRE *by Seldon Truss* (COWARD-MCCANN. $2.00)

A FASCINATING tale of a missing millionaire, his lovely young wife, her brother, a down-and-out ex-major, and a cleverly masked blackmailing scheme. A well written mystery story that is a worthy successor to the author's preceding book, *The Living Alibi.*

THE MYSTERIOUS DR. OLIVER *by J. Breckenridge Ellis* (MACAULAY. $2.00)

FOR thirteen years the victim of amnesia, the hero, Dr. Oliver, recovers his memory in a California earthquake. He discovers himself to be the moving figure in a strange cult, but after many puzzling events finally regains his equilibrium. Novel and entertaining to the mystery seeker.

THE BLACK CAMEL by *Earl Derr Biggers* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $2.00)

CHARLIE CHAN, a pretty smooth Oriental detective, gets a jolt when Shelah Kane, famous movie actress, is brutally murdered while a guest in Honolulu. He sets out with racial impassivity to find his man—and succeeds admirably, after leading the reader through a maze of difficulties that both delight and bewilder.

THE INCONSISTENT VILLAINS *by N. A. Temple-Ellis* (DUTTON. $2.00)

ARBUTHNOT, a modern Sherlock Holmes, and his Watson, in their attempt to avoid an unpleasant client, happen upon the corpse of a young doctor in a cottage on the North Sea coast, and plunge unexpectedly into a hornets nest. While the story lacks subtlety, it has sufficient action to interest a mystery lover.

THE FACE IN THE NIGHT *by Edgar Wallace.* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

LONDON, a group of diamond smugglers, and one "Slick Smith". Captain Shannon of Scotland Yard befriends a young girl and follows her through a maze of excitement and mystery. Make-believe murders are committed, and sinister mechanical devices are employed to keep the reader in suspense.

MALICE DOMESTIC *by William Roughead* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

AN UNUSUAL collection of true stories taken from authentic sources. Written around murders that resulted from domestic differences and jealousy, or that were committed, in some cases, for monetary gain. The reader is afforded a glimpse of remarkably fascinating and cold-blooded stranger-than-fiction crimes.

A TAP ON THE SHOULDER *by Morrison Dupree* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

YOUNG Dr. Stoughton is called in on a murder case and finds himself torn between duty and desire. This is a clever book, subordinating the murder to a study in psychology and offering a treat to those interested in emotional reactions.

THE PURPLE SICKLE MURDERS *by Freeman Wills Crofts* (HARPERS. $2.00)

INSPECTOR FRENCH, of detective-story fame, by an unexpected *coup d'éclat* solves the mystery of several apparent suicides. A gang of bloodthirsty and unscrupulous crooks work out a scheme to defraud the English government, but they are finally apprehended after a long and exciting chase that carries the reader along without a break to the bitter end. Recommended as a good plausible yarn.

GRIM VENGEANCE *by J. J. Connington* (LITTLE BROWN. $2.00)

ON THE eve of his retirement from Scotland Yard, Sir Clinton Driffield, famous criminologist, is faced with a difficult problem in his own family requiring immediate attention. His niece is married to a wealthy South American of questionable past, during the investigation of

(CONTINUED ON PAGE XXIX)

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# THE BOOK MART

The visitor to the book marts of today cannot complain of inattention. Indeed, it seems as though the clerks were getting in the way of one another. Guides and first aids for collectors come out every few days. There are bibliographies of nearly everybody. There are clubs galore. Private presses (most of which perform a public function) continue to multiply. There are printers who make nothing but limited editions. Catalogues were never so alluring. There are lists of "good novels" and "outstanding American books" (*not* the "hundred best" as in years gone by). All these agencies to encourage the laudable pursuit of book collecting are, of course, designed as aids to collectors. It is a question whether or not they are confusing the book buyer.

Mr. Merle Johnson, whose *High Spots of American Literature* has just been published, gives a list of works by 145 American authors, with a supplementary list of other "high spots" suggested to the compiler by friends and critics. Now, very few people are going to agree on any such list as the books necessary for the collector of American first editions. Some will be governed in their selection by the rarity of an author's work; others, purely by its literary merit, while generally speaking, the list is based upon the comparative popularity of different works of an author, as demonstrated by time. It is by no means necessary any two collectors should agree, provided each one is selecting a book which makes its particular appeal to him for reasons best known to himself. Unless the collector insists upon exercising his own judgment, regardless of lists, we shall have a standardized series of private libraries, as much like one another as two bungalows in New Jersey and California, drawn from the same architect's published plans. Heaven forfend that this should happen!

Nevertheless, these aids to collectors do perform a useful service in directing the attention of the great mass of collectors to neglected fields of collecting, since, for such collectors, Gutenberg Bibles and First Folios of Shakespeare exist only in other people's libraries. No single thing ever stimulated the collecting of American first editions to such a degree as did the publication, in 1897, of P. K. Foley's *American Authors*. That work listed, in addition to the outstanding and collected American writers, many names which are now almost forgotten, although once occupying a prominent place in American literature. Merle Johnson's *American First Editions,* now out of print and designed as a continuation of Foley's work, lists a lot of modern authors who in thirty years will share the fate of many of those in the earliest compilation. All the same, there will be a lot of new collectors who will "take up" with some of these authors and buy their first editions.

This will be a substantial help to the average dealer in rare and second-hand books who makes a living by selling books which do not come into the ten-thousand-dollar class. Furthermore, the collector himself will profit, though it may not be in a monetary way. He will become acquainted more intimately with a number of authors who have exercised, or are exercising, an appreciable influence on American literature.

The collector of the eighties and nineties of the last century, who was neglecting Herman Melville and gathering the works of Longfellow and Holmes, then "modern firsts", could not foresee that a later generation would seek for the stone which the builders rejected. The same possibility confronts the collector of today, and it is only by the exercise of a wise judgment that he will secure a collection which is in no sense one-sided.



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There is another line of book collecting which was not open to the men of the nineties—the gathering of beautiful books in limited editions, or "modern fine printing" as it is generally called. In this field today there is the widest possible range of choice. Fine books are being produced by a larger number of houses than ever before in this country's history. Indeed, the limited edition field is so large that one must exercise rare judgment to secure what is really the most desirable. A limited edition is not necessarily valuable because it is limited, any more than an old book is valuable merely because it is old. The appeal of such books is largely to the sense of beauty, and particularly to the collector interested in good typography. Some of them are filled with new matter, of varying quality, while others adhere to the old established favorites of literature, the latter being now presented in so many different forms that it is not a choice between subjects, but between printers. Here, too, the aids are useful in directing the attention of a larger number of collectors to the desirability of having a book well printed.

Among the forces which are encouraging and directing this line of collecting is The Laboratory Press of the Carnegie Institute of Technology, under the competent direction of Porter Garnett. Here a group of young men are learning to print, and a very interesting contribution to the history of typography in America is found in the various projects worked out by the students who do the designing, choose the paper, select and set the type and do the presswork of various pieces of literature approved by the director. *Two Passages from the Journal of Henry Marston, The Menace of Exploitation and the Commonplace* were selected for treatment by pupils. These *Passages* were originally printed in



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the first number of the Harvard miscellany, *The Hound and Horn,* in September, 1927. In this form the *Passages* were prefaced by a note signed by Newton Arvin. As this note was lacking in biographical details about Henry Marston, "an obscure instructor in philosophy in a Middle Western college when he died", Mr. Garnett asked the editors of *The Hound and Horn* for dates of his birth, his graduation from Harvard and his death, and was referred to Mr. Arvin. In due course he received a letter, stating that "no such data are available, and this for the reason that Henry Marston himself is a pure fiction". Mr. Arvin confessed to being the author of the *Passages* himself. Owning a weakness for "creative spoofing", Mr. Garnett gave out the *Passages* as an exercise for The Laboratory Press and the result is a beautiful specimen of printing which may well be the desideratum of any collector of modern fine printing. In fact, everything that has come from The Laboratory Press belongs in this category. Incidentally, the *Passages* should be classed in with the publication of *The Society of Calligraphers* which William A. Dwiggins, with the aid of Thedam Puterschein, foisted upon the world a decade ago.

## NOTES ON NEW BOOKS—(*continued*)

which three murders are committed. Sir Clinton coöperates with the local police, and in the end offers a unique surprise. An exceptionally well planned mystery story.

GUNMAN'S BLUFF *by Edgar Wallace* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

A THRILLER, introducing a shanghied millionaire-banker and a gang of confidence men in London. The methods of American gunmen lend an up-to-date atmosphere to this engaging yarn.

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Edward Fitzgerald's Translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam and of Six Plays of Calderon *with introduction by Ernest Rhys* (Dutton, Everyman Library. $.80). Including two versions of the Rubaiyat and a life of Omar.

The Plays of J. M. Barrie (Scribner, one vol. $5.00). A beautifully printed, convenient edition, with *Half an Hour* and two other previously unpublished plays added.

*Verse*

Fifty Fables from La Fontaine (Oxford. $1.50). Delightfully translated into English verse by Radcliffe Carter.

Hafiz, The Tongue of the Hidden (Viking. $2.00). 101 epigrams done into the Fitzgerald quatrain by Clarence K. Streit, with a life of Hafiz and a note on the translation of Persian verse.

*Voyage and Adventure*

Heroes from Hakluyt *by Charles J. Finger* (Henry Holt. $4.50). The meat of Hakluyt's Drake, the Frobishers, and the Cabots, with connecting passages, by one who is himself a good adventurer. Colored wood cuts by Paul Honoré.

Hakluyt's Voyages *with introduction by John Masefield* (Dutton, ten vols. $3.00 each). The whole story.

The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico *translated by A. P. Maudslay* (Harpers, Broadway Travellers Series. $5.00). Bernal Diaz del Castillo's eye-witness account, first published by the Hakluyt Society.



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